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EDUCATION AND THE MORES

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EDUCATION AND THE MORES

A Sociological Essay

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PREFACE

This essay is an attempt to interpret education in the light of one of its principal social functions. By education is meant the training of younger generations by older members of the community. The adults may instruct in their capacity as parents, as participants in ceremony or as members of a civil institution. In any of these cases their activity has the support of social sanction. This sanction is group approval, expressed or implied, of any activity which is conducive to group welfare or survival. Since group success is generally associated with certain traditions, to conserve them becomes the aim of education.

A consideration of the beliefs and the habits of thought which are perpetuated by this process requires a definition of the mores. The mores are forms of usage which have current approbation in a community at a time and place. They are a mass of customs, habits, ways of thinking and acting, which ordinarily we accept and follow without attention. We become aware of them only when attention is drawn to some act or notion that shocks our sense of propriety and decorum. The mores are the objective products of interstimulation and response.

The concept of "mores" has received most elaborate treatment in Professor Sumner's book, "*The Folkways.*" The writer can do no better than to quote at this point certain passages from it. Says Sumner: ". . . we must conceive of the mores as a vast system of usages, covering the whole of life, and serving all its interests; also containing in

125170

themselves their own justification by tradition and use and wont, and approved by mystic sanctions until, by rational reflection they develop their own philosophical and ethical generalizations, which are elevated into 'principles' of truth and right." [1] And in another passage Sumner says of the mores: "They are the ways of doing things which are current in a society to satisfy human needs and desires, together with the faiths, notions, codes, and standards of well living which inhere in those ways, having a genetic connection with them. By virtue of the latter element the mores are traits in the specific character (ethos) of a society or a period. They pervade and control the ways of thinking in all the exigencies of life, returning from the world of abstractions to the world of action, to give guidance and to win revivification." [2] For the purpose of this study it has seemed best to put emphasis upon the unconscious characteristics of the mores. In this respect the conception of the mores held by von Hartmann and Lazarus is illuminating. Von Hartmann says: "The mores are, before any beginning of reflection, the regulators of the political, social, and religious behavior of the individual. Conscious reflection is the worst enemy of the mores, because mores begin unconsciously and pursue unconscious purposes, which are recognized by reflection only after long and circuitous processes, and because their expediency often depends on the assumption that they will have general acceptance and currency, uninterfered with by reflection." [3] Lazarus says: "The mores are usage in any group, in so far as it, on the one hand, is not the expression or fulfilment of an absolute

[1] Sumner, *Folkways* (Boston, 1907), p. 79.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 59.

[3] K. R. E. von Hartmann, *Phänomenologie des sittlichen Bewusstseins* (Berlin, 1879), p. 73.

natural necessity (*e. g.*, eating or sleeping) and, on the other hand, is independent of the arbitrary will of the individual, and is generally accepted as good and proper, appropriate and worthy." [1]

A study of education in the light of the foregoing conceptions shows that in many instances the community seeks to preserve its mores by initiation ceremonies. It seeks to make reverence for the group traditions a habitual attitude of mind. In other societies, selected classes seek to perpetuate certain of their mores. Education is to train youth in the habit of reverence for antiquity and uncritical admiration for the works of classical writers. In yet other societies, there has been in education a differentiation of function concomitant with a differentiation of interests. Consequently we have educational systems aiming to preserve certain mores of many different classes. But in all communities the principal social function of education has been the conservation of certain traditions. The mores of place and time have determined which traditions.

Throughout this essay the terms tradition, custom, superstition, and prejudice are frequently used. It will be well to define them here.

By tradition is meant any way of thinking or any way of acting which has become habitual in a group of people and associated with the group's past achievements. Tradition is the general term embracing all the mental achievements of mankind from habits of thought to social institutions. Traditions are handed down from generation to generation by suggestion, imitation, and instruction, and are regarded as important group prerogatives. Traditions always have a certain rational justification, however slight. By rational justification is meant a justification involving explanations based upon logical reasoning from cause to effect.

[1] *Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie*, vol. i, p. 439.

By custom is meant habits of thought and action which are of a more local nature than tradition. Custom is one of the particular forms of tradition.

Superstitions are traditions which have highly irrational sanctions connected with them. The emotional element is usually pronounced.

By prejudice is meant dogmatic or authoritative views on any subject which do not admit of adjustment in the face of established contradictory facts.

F. Stuart Chapin.

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CONTENTS

PAGE

CHAPTER I

The Thesis Outlined 11

CHAPTER II

Some Historical Antecedents of Tradition 19

CHAPTER III

Education Conserves the Mores. 35

CHAPTER IV

The Importance and the Extent of the Mores 70

CHAPTER V

Elementary School Curricula and the Mores. 82

CHAPTER I

The Thesis Outlined

The original function of education was the conservation of tradition and custom, and when we examine the subject-matter of primitive tradition we suspect that education has functioned chiefly as a conserver of Superstition and Prejudice. This suspicion perhaps would be unimportant if it applied only to former educational schemes. Unfortunately it reaches further, because, as the writer expects to show, home and institutional education is still predominantly concerned with the transmission of tradition and custom.

Possibly this statement does not redound to the credit of organized education. We must remember, however, that like church and government, education had its humble and strange beginnings. For it to have become liberal suddenly would have been a miracle. In the early ages, education was the first conscious effort of primitive man to assure the future observance of those habits of thought and action embodied in his customs and traditions, which he associated with past successes and failures, and which he quite naturally felt must be the mainsprings of future success and happiness. Traditions are relatively immovable things, they are at the center of gravity of any social system and their inertia is at once a source of strength and of weakness. Certain traditions were associated with group strength and group safety. Men sought to conserve them by inculcating in the young a sense of their importance and power. Later on, when institutional education developed, there was a tendency to discriminate in the choice of ma-

terial to be conserved. But only in more recent times have men begun to realize the dangers of too literal an interpretation of the content of traditions and customs. With this realization has grown a desire to change the spirit of education from a mere eulogistic study of the past to a critical estimate of the common interests of humanity as represented in its traditions.

It is therefore the purpose of this study to call attention to the inertia and rigidity of tradition, custom, and prejudice; to show how the social heritage has been the source of those motives which have animated educational policy in the past and present; and finally, to show how our present educational system still tends to emphasize the traditional element with its traditional sanction, rather than the universal element with its sanction of humanity's common interests.

The phenomena of the child's expanding interests and the study of their appearance and development now have an important place in scientific pedagogy. Children are naturally observant of all that goes on in their environment and their curiosity to find out the "how" and the "why" is one of the hopes of mankind's future. But this questioning observation, this interest in all that is new and strange, is ignored or is actually discouraged by parents and teachers, and often because of some custom,[1] tradition, prejudice, or superstition which has a real or fancied objection to enlightenment and understanding. Now if education ought to concern itself with giving the individual the power of adaptation to an ever-changing environment, then since customs and traditions which stand for a fixed order of things are the main obstacles to the acquirement of this power, it becomes important to inquire into the historical antecedents of tradition and custom.

[1] Spencer, *Education* (New York, 1886), p. 27.

Out of the many elements which contributed to the formation of customs and traditions, probably constant environmental factors as sources of repeated stimulation were most important in determining the general trend or character of legends, myths, and folkways. For instance, the sea or ocean is often an important element, character, or deity, in the tales of coastwise tribes.

The cumulative effect through long periods of time, of the responses of human organisms in group life to relatively constant factors of their environment, has been a dominant cause in the formation of tradition, custom, and prejudice. The product is distinctly a social one, because interstimulation and response [1] are important factors in modifying and compounding the effects of individual responses. The individual responses are refracted by each other, they play upon each other, meanwhile drawing new impetus from the repetition of stimulation of this sort. One peculiarity of this social product is that it disseminates belief in a constant environment. Traditions tend to become dogmatic and static for several reasons. In the first place, it is a recognized law of psychology that repetition of response through repetition of the stimulation tends to make the response habitual and unconscious, and habits, whether individual or social, are relatively fixed ways of doing things. In the second place, the factors of environment which produced the stimuli, were, as concerns primitive man's untrained powers of observation, apparently constant. In the third place, man, as well as other species, has a dislike of extreme innovation. Action was in the line of least resistance in early society as it is to-day, and it was easier to follow the grooves of custom than to be daring and attempt innovation. Moreover the habitual act, the usual way, was asso-

[1] Giddings, *Descriptive and Historical Sociology*, (New York, 1906).

ciated from time immemorial with group safety and comfort. Finally, innovations were often associated with chance-failure or calamity.

We are driven in our last analysis of social causation to acknowledge the correlation between a belief in absoluteness, fixity in all things, immutability, and habitual responses to relatively constant environmental factors. The two seemed justifiably linked as cause and effect. Belief in the fixed environment is amply illustrated by the growth of Theologies, philosophic ideas of Perfection, ideas of Utopias, and of Millenniums.

The responses of primitive man to the severe stimuli of environment, created such vivid ideas and deeply-etched images in his mind, that he could not always distinguish between idea and the objective fact. Thus the mental content reacted to increase the constraint to which man was subjected instead of leading him out of his difficulties. But those purely unconscious social habits, the folkways, which are the result of habitual response, are productive of a social constraint that ensures type. Traditions and superstitions, forming the social tissue that bound a man with his ancestors, one age with another, exercised a tyranny and a leveling power which we have hardly yet been able to weaken. We can realize the effects of this undifferentiated social pressure when we observe the monotony of life in the backward civilizations of India and China. But add to the social pressure of traditions and customs themselves, the conscious effort of society to perpetuate traditions by education, to stamp out innovation by persecution, to glory in authoritative usage and the ritual of obsolete customs, and one can form a faint conception of the meaning of Bagehot's "cake of custom."

Society found it desirable to preserve its traditions because it had come to associate group survival with adher-

ence to what was established. Moreover, the notion was widespread that since environment was a constant quantity, what was once done, was done for all time. The desire for group survival and the belief in fixed environment have probably been the two chief motives of education. Education thus became the preserver of tradition and custom, superstition and prejudice. Men believed that environment was a constant quantity, therefore they conceived home and institutional education as the process of securing the adaptation of each succeeding generation to what was believed to be a changeless order of things.

Accordingly, that was taught which the mores of any time said was right. No account was taken of the questioning observation, the dawning interest, and the plastic adaptability of each new generation; the best possible evidence that environment, physical and social, was a changing quantity. And man, confident in his idea of the fixed environment, crushed out this continually recurring recognition of dynamic environment and proceeded to force the old order of things upon the new generation, stunting its power of progress and refined adjustment and probably discouraging much valuable variation. Education thus became but another source of social pressure to secure the selection of the superstitious and the tradition-loving.

But institutional education tended to operate less crudely than some other sources of social constraint. It tended to become more discriminating as time went on, and slowly the grosser forms of superstition were sifted out. But this tendency towards discrimination in the selection of material to be conserved was usually determined by the overreaching of precedent and should not be interpreted as a conscious effort to select the progressive and universal. The progress from superstitions of grosser sort to those of milder sort, came because of conflict between incongruous elements

in the mores of the time. In their contest for supremacy, these opposing standards gradually canceled out of the educational scheme those elements that were least justifiable because they had least adaptive capacity for meeting genuine human needs.

With scientific discovery and mechanical invention, man's old belief in the fixity of all things was shaken. It is doubtful if any other cause in history has operated so successfully, though indirectly and inadvertently, to undermine false notions engendered by tradition and superstition, as the diffusion of benefits attributable to science and mechanical invention. With the multiplication of benefits and the popularization of scientific ideas, the mores of the most enlightened social strata began to see that environment changes, is active, is "dynamic." The masses, however, remained firm in their faith in Perfection, Utopias, and Millenniums. But the old, crude, undifferentiated response to constant factors of the environment, was gradually broken up into a multiform mass of differentiated responses. This change has been rapid, because of the marvelous progress of discovery, and a gradual diffusion of the implications of the idea of Evolution. The mores are disorganized and find adjustment difficult.

The new idea of "dynamic" environment permeated the mores of the more intelligent classes of society which control educational policy both as models of imitation and as direct sources of power. It began to appear in the subject-matter that education worked over. So organized education, as an effort to meet on the one hand the demands of the upper social strata for a diffusion of scientific knowledge, and on the other hand the demands of the lower social strata for the conservation of custom and tradition, finds itself in a transition state. Subjected to the strain of both demands, the present generation of pupils suffers.

The new idea has crept in. First the customary curriculum (largely composed of traditional matter) has been disturbed. New subjects have been reluctantly admitted. But though the curriculum has been expanded, this good has been almost wholly neutralized by retaining the dogmatic method in teaching the new material. The subjects taught are still taught as if they were absolute or fixed for all time. Things that have arisen in acknowledgment of change and in response to it, are themselves taught as if they were fixed. And this is because the mores are essentially inert and do not change easily or rapidly. General scientific ideas, because of their implications, are disturbing to those deep-seated customs and traditions that are imbedded in the mores. Besides, the folkways are social habits which arose in direct response to the needs of particular situations. They engendered ideas which were essentially opposed to universal suggestions. Universal notions in the beginning would have weakened group solidarity and invited destruction. Therefore the mores of to-day, notwithstanding long conflict between slow changing traditions and new interests, are still provincial and "philistine." Accordingly, universal scientific notions penetrating into the curriculum of our elementary school system have secured their place there only through a compromise with hostile mores. Therefore we have the teaching of disconnected scientific facts, and general scientific notions are made harmless to the tradition-loving. All danger incident to wide application is removed by breaking science up into unconnected groups of facts and isolated instances. This is a chief reason why the subjects of the curriculum appear unrelated and disconnected to the student. He must learn this and that without explanation of what A is for or of how it is related to B.

Invention, discovery, travel and improved methods of

communication, are giving all classes of society more confidence in themselves and in knowledge and less confidence in authoritative usage.

Nevertheless, we carry along our inheritance. The practical question becomes that of determining whether or not our present organized education tends to conserve obstructive tradition and mischievous prejudice. Or, putting it in another way, our effort should be to ascertain whether the pressure of elementary school education as a type-forming instrument of civil society tends to select the timid and tradition-loving. Does our elementary education give mere drilling in traditional lore to a majority of those who enjoy its benefits before they quit school, or does it train their reasoning powers and furnish them with knowledge of universal human interest?

CHAPTER II

Some Historical Antecedents of Tradition

The historical antecedents of custom, tradition, superstition, and prejudice are to be found in the struggle of primitive man to survive under the tremendous pressure of physical environment. Constraint was exerted by climate, extremes of heat and cold, variations of moisture, uncertainty of food supply, dangers from wild beasts, the terrifying or inspiring aspects of nature, and a thousand permutations of these factors. Later on, in the great populations of early civilization, famine, epidemic, and disease became new terrors. For a time terrors multiplied as consciousness expanded. And every occurrence was seen as unique. The world was chaotic and haphazard, each circumstance was the work of a different power. Man could not generalize the phenomena of nature into law.

Imagined terrors became themselves a source of constraint. Ideas and images were confused with facts. "Even in healthy waking life, the savage or barbarian has never learnt to make . . . rigid distinction between subjective and objective, between imagination and reality." [1] That is to say, the savage's inability to discriminate between the image in his mind and the environmental stimulus which produced it, led him to accumulate a vast and complex mass of superficial impressions. These when crystalized into beliefs, were often handed down from generation to

[1] Tylor, *Primitive Culture* (London, 1871), 1st ed., vol. i, p. 402.

generation and so were wrought into custom, tradition, and forms of authoritative usage.[1]

Bagehot said:

> A modern savage is anything but the simple being which the philosophers of the eighteenth century imagined him to be; on the contrary, his life is twisted into a thousand curious habits; his reason is darkened by a thousand strange prejudices; his feelings are frightened by a thousand cruel superstitions. The whole mind of the modern savage is, so to say, *tatooed* over with monstrous images; there is not a smooth place anywhere about it.[2]

In attempting to explain such complex phenomena it is important to avoid implying a single cause. Most social phenomena are products of many small causes in combination. It is highly probable that the cumulative effect through long periods of time, of the responses of human organisms in group life to relatively constant factors of environment, has been the dominant cause of common tradition. Tradition and custom are distinctly social products, however, since the interstimulation of communicating minds is an important factor in modifying and compounding the effects of individual responses.[3] Individual responses are refracted by each other, and play upon each

[1] In Dewey and Tufts' *Ethics* we read, pages 52 to 53: "The origin of customs is to be sought in several concurrent factors. There are in the first place the activities induced by the great primative needs and instincts. Some ways of acting succeed; some fail. Man not only establishes habits of acting in the successful ways; he remembers his failures. He hands successful ways down with his approval; he condemns those that fail.

This attitude is reënforced by the views about good luck and bad luck. Primitive man—and civilized man—is not ruled by a purely rational theory of success and failure."

[2] Bagehot, *Physics and Politics*, p. 120.

[3] Giddings, *Descriptive and Historical Sociology, passim.*

other while becoming habitual and, as Bagehot would say, "caking" into custom.

When we attempt to analyze the relatively constant factors of physical environment which exert a controling influence upon man's mental content, we discover that what Buckle terms the "general aspects of nature" are chiefly significant. They comprise topography, drainage, and meteorological conditions. The mountains, the heated plains, the deserts, the hurricanes, the swollen rivers, and the earthquakes of India are characteristic aspects of nature in that region. Rolling country, green hills, clear lakes are details of a general aspect of nature in England. Without admitting that the whole difference between the English mind and the mind of man in India may be attributed to these environmental influences we must assume that environmental differences have been profoundly effective; for throughout the world the constraints of custom are most severe where society lives under terrible aspects of nature, and least severe where the aspects of nature are mild or inspiring.

The devastations of animals hostile to man, the ravages of hurricanes, tempests, earthquakes, and similar perils, constantly pressed upon them, and affected the tone of their national character. For the mere loss of life was the smallest part of the inconvenience. The real mischief was, that there were engendered in the mind associations which made the imagination predominate over the understanding, which infused into the people a spirit of reverence instead of a spirit of inquiry; and which encouraged a disposition to neglect the investigation of natural causes and ascribe events to the operation of supernatural ones.[1]

The general aspects of nature on the whole inspire terror

[1] Buckle, *The History of Civilization in England*, (London, 1873), ch. ii, p. 126.

or confidence as they awaken in imagination suggestions of sudden disaster or of permanent security. This law assumes first-rate importance among primitive or savage men who in normal states of suggestibility are nearly or quite incapable of distinguishing between the images of imagination and objective reality.

The human organism seems of all organisms the most sensitive to a large variety of stimuli:

> Now, so far as natural phenomena are concerned, it is evident, that whatever inspires feelings of terror, or of great wonder, and whatever excites in the mind an idea of the vague and uncontrollable, has a special tendency to inflame the imagination, and to bring under its dominion the slower and more deliberate operations of the understanding. In such cases, Man, contracting himself with the force and majesty of Nature, becomes painfully conscious of his own insignificance. A sense of inferiority steals over him. From every quarter innumerable obstacles hem him in, and limit his individual will, His mind, appalled by the indefined and indefinable, hardly cares to scrutinize the details of which such imposing grandeur consists.[1]

[1] Buckle, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

In another passage Buckle analyzes the effect of one of the most fearful aspects of physical environment, a phenomena more common in torrid regions than elsewhere.

"Of those physical events which increase the insecurity of Man, earthquakes are certainly among the most striking, in regard to the loss of life which they cause, as also in regard to their sudden and unexpected occurrence. There is reason to believe that they are always preceded by atmospheric changes which strike immediately at the nervous system, and thus have a direct physical tendency to impair the intellectual powers. However this may be, there can be no doubt as to the effect they produce in encouraging particular associations and habits of thought. The terror which they inspire excites the imagination even to a painful extent, and, overbalancing the judgment, predisposes men to superstitious fancies. And what is highly curious is that repetitions so far from blunting such feelings, strengthens them," *ibid.*, pp. 121-122.

If a man has once done a thing in a particular way he has a tendency to do it again in the same way; and if he has done it many times he has a strong tendency so to do it, and, what is more, he develops a tendency to make others do it in that way. Professor Boas tells us that in so far as he has been able to investigate the causes of peculiar associations in the mental content of savages, he finds that in the stream of consciousness of primitive men a sensory stimulus is likely to release strong emotions, which in turn are connected with certain groups of ideas. In this way the emotions which are common to both the sensory stimulus and the connected ideas, establish associations among groups of ideas that to us appear entirely unrelated. For a like reason, it seems impossible for primitive men to establish purely rationalistic associations between sense impressions and acts determined by volition, which seem obvious to civilized man. Moreover, "A study of primitive life shows that particularly every customary action attains a very strong emotional tone, which increases the stability of the custom." [1]

The individual tends to respond to a sudden stimulus in a sudden and impetuous manner; many individuals col-

[1] Boas, "Anthropology" in the *Columbia University Lectures on Science, Philosophy and Art*, p. 25.

Again, in his essay "The Mind of Primitive Man," Professor Boas says, speaking of traditions and activities:

"The more frequently this action is repeated, the more firmly it will become established, and the less will be the conscious equivalent accompanying the action; so the customary actions which are of very frequent repetition become entirely unconscious. Hand in hand with this decrease of consciousness goes an increase in the emotional value of the omission of such activities, and still more of the performance of actions contrary to custom. A greater will power is required to inhibit an action which has become well established; and combined with this effort of the will power are feelings of intense displeasure." Boas, "The Mind of Primitive Man," *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, vol. xiv, p. 9.

lectively subject to a stimulus tend to respond in a violent manner. The cumulative effect of repeated like responses of this sort is emotionalism and a certain violence and grotesqueness of imagination. Where the natural environment of primitive man, and later of savage man, was awe inspiring or terrifying, the stimulus it gave to the emotions was severe and harsh, and to this harsh incitement man responded with harsh reflex. Continued repetition of stimuli, whether the stimuli were objective environmental phenomena or the grotesque ideas which they had produced in man's mental content, tended to make the response habitual.

The bulk of the experience of man is gained from oft-repeated impression. It is one of the fundamental laws of psychology that repetition of mental processes increases the facility with which these processes are performed, and decreases the degree of consciousness that accompanies them. This law expresses the well-known phenomena of habit. When a certain perception is frequently associated with another previous perception, the one will habitually call forth the other. When a certain stimulus frequently results in a certain action, it will tend to call forth habitually the same action. If a stimulus has often produced a certain emotion it will tend to reproduce it every time.[1]

We are then safe in explaining various superstitions by cumulative response to factors of the environment, which, as manifestations of uncontrolable power, were sources of intermittent and violent suggestion or stimulation to imagination. Professor Boas says, "There can be no doubt that the impression made by the grandeur of nature upon the mind of primitive man is the ultimate cause from which these myths spring, but nevertheless the form in which we

[1] Boas, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

find these traditions is largely influenced by the borrowing." [1]

Where natural surroundings are mild, the constraint they exercise is refined and differentiated and the social tissue of tradition and superstition is more picturesque than revolting. The fact that superstitions of a brutal sort often persist in the folkways of a people living in a mild environment means only that tradition and superstition die hard. The law of inertia holds in society as in the physical world. Every tradition and superstition continues in its state of autocracy and intolerance as a source of control until it is overborne by accumulating interests and accidents. Superstitions in the mores of a people otherwise enlightened, if not survivals from life in another habitat, are commonly imitations from the mores of a neighboring or conquering people. And although in most cases among enlightened peoples, the earliest superstitions of the race have long since disintegrated, they have usually left their mark upon mental aptitudes. One consequence has been a capacity for the adoption by imitation of whatever new superstitions were most nearly like the old.

In the superposition of peoples upon peoples, in the course of social evolution, it has sometimes happened that various superstitions were fortified by the discovery that some element was common to the otherwise differing traditions of two peoples. In this way one myth reënforced another, so that by merest chance they waxed stronger while others were correspondingly weakened. Professor Boas tells us that certain complex tales which could not possibly have been invented twice are told in Morocco, Italy, Ireland, Russia, In-

[1] Boas, "The Growth of Indian Mythologies," *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, vol. ix, p. 9.

dia, Thibet, Siberia, and on the prairies of North America.[1] Indeed, anthropologists have begun to recognize that in prehistoric times the transmission of cultural elements was almost unlimited and that ideas and inventions have spread over whole continents. At the close of his description of the mythology of the Bella Coola Indians, Professor Boas says:

> Our analysis shows that this system cannot be considered as an importation, but that it probably developed among the Bella Coola themselves. After they removed to their new home, a mass of foreign ideas had come into their possession through contact with their new neighbors. While these new ideas were being remodelled and assimilated, they stimulated the minds of the people, or of a few members of the tribe, who were thus led to the formation of an elaborate conception of the world. The concept which they have developed agrees in all its main features with those created by the men of other zones and of other races. The mind of the Bella Coola philosopher, operating with the class of knowledge common to the earlier strata of culture, has reached conclusions similar to those that have been found by man the world over, when operating with the same class of knowledge. On the other hand, the Bella Coola has also adopted ready-made the thoughts of his neighbors, and has adapted them to his environment.[2]

For other illustrations of the survival of tradition among a migrating people, as a culture ground for new superstitions, we may recall the belief in witches transplanted from England to New England, and the content of the folkways of the negroes of the South, whose African superstitions

[1] "Anthropology," p. 21.

[2] "The Mythology of the Bella Coola Indians," in *The Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History*, p. 127, vol. ii.

lived on after the original source of stimulation, the old environment, was left behind. Mrs. E. Gerard, speaking of the tenacity with which the Transylvania Saxons cling to their old customs and traditions, says:

Whoever has lived among these Transylvania Saxons, and has taken the trouble to study them, must have remarked that not only seven centuries' residence in a strange land and in the midst of antagonistic races has made them lose none of their identity, but that they are, so to say, *plus Catholiques que le pape*—that is, more thoroughly Teutonic than the Germans living to-day in the original father-land. And it is just because of the adverse circumstances in which they were placed, and of the opposition and attacks which met them on all sides, that they have kept themselves so conservatively unchanged. Feeling that every step in another direction was a step towards the enemy, finding that every concession they made threatened to become the link of a captive's chain, no wonder they cling stubbornly, tenaciously, blindly to each peculiarity of language, dress and custom, in a manner which has probably not got its parallel in history. Left on their native soil, and surrounded by friends and countrymen, they would undoubtedly have changed as other nations have changed. Their isolated position and the peculiar circumstances of their surroundings have kept them what they were.[1]

It is probable that as primitive man began to observe that the blows of nature fell without discrimination upon all, he began to associate accidental change in the way of performing a customary act,[2] with disaster to the group. He assumed that repetition of the innovation would be followed by like disaster.[3] Similarly, it may have happened

[1] *The Land Beyond the Forest*, pp. 31-32.

[2] Bagehot, *Physics and Politics*, pp. 127-128.

[3] "The worst of these superstitions is that they are easy to make and hard to destroy. A single run of luck has made the fortune of many a charm and many idols. I doubt if even a single run of luck be necessary" *ibid.*, p. 131.

that the transgression of a rule of conduct was followed by calamity to the group. Thereafter any like transgression would be carefully guarded against, in the belief that a like calamity would be the inevitable consequence.

The dread of the powers of nature, or of the beings who rule those powers, is properly, upon the grounds of reason, as much greater than any other dread as the might of the powers of nature is superior to that of any other powers. If a tribe or a nation have, by contagious fancy, come to believe that the doing of any one thing by any member will be "unlucky," that is, will bring an intense and vast liability on them all, then that tribe and that nation will prevent the doing of that thing more than anything else. They will deal with the most cherished chief who even by chance should do it, as in a similar case the sailors dealt with Jonah.[1]

Thus the dread of catastrophy or disaster to the group, is probably a fundamental cause of the savage's dislike of innovation.[2] We can form some notion of how deep-seated and elemental a characteristic of our nature this dislike of innovation is, when we realize how widespread are prejudices of all kinds among civilized people.

But in early ages the act of one member of the tribe is conceived to make all the tribe impious, to offend its peculiar god, to expose all the tribe to penalties from heaven. There is no "limited liability" in the political notions of that time. The early tribe or nation is a religious partnership, on which a rash member by a sudden impiety may bring utter ruin.

[1] Bagehot, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

[2] In Dewey and Tufts' *Ethics*, page 53, we read: "One of the most important, if not the most important, object of early legislation was the enforcement of lucky rites to prevent the individual from doing what might bring ill luck on all the tribe. For the conception always was that ill luck does not attach itself simply to the doer, but may fall upon any member of the group."

If the state is conceived thus, toleration becomes wicked. A permitted deviation from the transmitted ordinances becomes simple folly. It is a sacrifice of the happiness of the greatest number. It is allowing one individual, for a moment's pleasure or a stupid whim, to bring a terrible and irretrievable calamity upon all.[1]

One does not have to go far to-day in social discourse to encounter like prejudice. Indeed, it is only necessary to state a novel idea to find out how soon people will become suspicious.

One of the greatest pains to human nature is the pain of a new idea. It is, as common people say, so "upsetting," it makes you think that, after all, your favorite notions may be wrong, your firmest beliefs ill-founded; it is certain that till now there was no place allotted in your mind to the new and startling inhabitant, and now that it has conquered an entrance you do not at once see which of your old ideas it will or will not turn out, with which of them it can be reconciled, and with which it is at essential enmity. Naturally, therefore, common men hate a new idea, and are disposed more or less to ill-treat the original man who brings it. Even nations with long habits of discussion are intolerant enough.[2]

Sir Henry Sumner Maine has written about the hatred of change which is one of the prominent characteristics of a great part of the human race. In his works on *Ancient Law* and *Popular Government*, he says:

It is indisputable that much the greatest part of mankind has never shown a particle of desire that its civil institutions should be improved since the moment when external completeness was first given to them by their embodiment in some permanent record.[3]

[1] Bagehot, *op. cit.*, p. 102. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 163.

[3] *Ancient Law* (London, 1861), p. 21.

To the fact that the enthusiasm for change is comparatively rare must be added the fact that it is extremely modern. It is known but to a small part of mankind, and to that part but for a short period during a history of incalculable length. It is not older than the free employment of legislation by popular governments.[1]

Vast populations, some of them with a civilization considerable but peculiar, detest that which in the language of the West would be called reform. The entire Mohammedan world detests it. The great multitudes of colored men who swarm in the great continent of Africa detest it, and it is detested by that large part of mankind which we are accustomed to leave on one side as barbarous or savage. The millions upon millions of men who fill the Chinese Empire loathe it and (what is more) despise it . . . the enormous mass of the Indian population hates and dreads change.[2]

There is a sense of security in having things settled. Even if primitive man could not ascertain the natural causes of a phenomenon, his belief in a supernatural agency fulfilled the purpose as well. The supernatural explanation was easiest to come by, for it was immediately suggested by imagination. It required no difficult or arduous reasoning process. It was quick and satisfying. It filled the need of explaining things and so gave the desired feeling of security. If someone suggested that the explanation was erroneous, if the supernatural cause was not the real one, what then was it? Answer to this question would require a repetition of the painful groping after light which the primitive man had gone through to arrive at the supernatural explanation. Such dreary effort would require leisure, a luxury that came in later ages and not possessed by primitive man.

Belief in the fixity of their traditions and rituals, in their

[1] *Popular Government* (London, 1886), p. 134.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 132-133.

immutability and infallibility as sources of truth and guidance, gave to the people who possessed it, other things being equal, a greater solidarity and efficiency, a much greater power of effective team-work, than they could have enjoyed with uncertain traditions. Consequently, established customs and traditions were an important element in early group survival. They aided the group which possessed them to overwhelm the unorganized group. As sources of strength, their survival was assured not only by natural selection but also by imitation and adoption.

Professor Boas finds evidence among the Indians of the North Pacific coast which illustrates the imitation of desirable traditions:

> One of the most remarkable features in the inner life of the tribes of the northern coast of British Columbia is the great importance of the clan legend, which is considered one of the most valuable properties of each clan or family. It is carefully guarded in the same way as material property, and an attempt on the part of a person not a member of the clan to tell the tradition as his own is considered one of the gravest offenses against property rights. The possession of the clan tradition is felt by the Indian to be one of his most important prerogatives. When, therefore, the Bella Coola settled on Bella Coola River, and were thrown into contact with the northern Coast tribes, the lack of a well-developed clan tradition must have been felt as a serious drawback.[1]

Thus the "imitation of appreciated character," as Bagehot calls it, whether that character be a model individual or a model tradition, is a great force in primitive and savage society. But the model imitated must be presented in the garb of the old and accustomed, because:

> . . . on the whole we value most highly what conforms to

[1] "Mythology of the Bella Coola Indians," p. 123.

our previous actions. This does not imply that it must be identical with our previous actions, but it must be on the line of development of our previous actions. . . No action can find the approval of a people which is fundamentally opposed to its customs and traditions.[1]

Tarde has shown how the imitation of a mere fashion that attracts attention as an admirable one becomes in time fixed itself:

. . . imitation which was at first custom-imitation and then fashion-imitation, turns back again to custom, but under a form that is singularly enlarged and precisely opposite to its first form. In fact, primitive custom obeys, whereas custom in its final stage commands, generation. The one is the exploitation of a social by a living form; the other, the exploitation of a living by a social form.[2]

Many of the factors, physical and social, in primitive man's environment, operated to increase his belief in absoluteness, fixity, immovableness, and constancy, as the great law of existence. When we think of the short period of written history as compared with the vast stretches of time which preceded our oldest authentic date, we can begin to understand how deep-seated and elemental a thing in man's nature is his faith in established usage and we can even make allowance for his aversion to innovation. All the ages of unwritten history did little else but pound into man's mental content a reverence for the established and a hatred of innovation. Shall this teaching of the ages be controverted in a few centuries?

But there is another side to this whole matter. The harsh social pressure generated by the accumulation of supersti-

[1] Boas, "The Mind of Primitive Man," p. 10.

[2] *Laws of Imitation* (New York, 1903), Parsons trans., p. 253.

tions and irrational belief produces a social selection.[1] The dread of the consequences of innovation, a dread established in man's mental content through centuries of teaching which had all emphasized the advantage of changeless customs, this dread of innovation produced a widespread and uncompromising intolerance.[2] Just as the rigors of the physical environment through natural selection chose certain adaptable types for survival, so, long before civilization, the social hatred of the innovator exercised a social selection which chose in all cases for approval and in most cases for actual survival, those individuals who continuously adhered to tradition.

In those regions where the environment was harsh and violent in its stimulation of imagination and where a correspondingly cruel and grotesque content of tradition had developed, those individuals best got on who conformed most literally to the requirements of established usage. "In barbarian and savage communities the collective regulation of life is not less but greater than it is in the civilized state. The bounds that may not be overstepped are narrow and dread. Immemorial custom is inflexible, and half of all the possible joys of existence are forbidden and taboo."[3] The selective influence of social pressure was to eliminate all who varied far from the type[4] demanded by the actual superstitions and prejudices. Time and again some variation in the direction of refinement and sympathy must have been crushed out, so that the rude, the coarse, the unintellectual, who bowed before tradition, might survive. This

[1] Giddings, "Social Self-Control," *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. xxiv, no. 4, December, 1909.

[2] Bagehot, *Physics and Politics*, p. 102-104.

[3] Giddings, *op. cit.*

[4] *Ibid.*

meant the selection and multiplication of the ignorant, superstitious, and the unintellectual. The refined variate, if he survived the rigors of selection by physical environment, was none the less surely subjected to the fatal pressure of established usage.

Where the aspects of nature were harsh and where the bare necessities of life were scarce, there mere survival was difficult. But the terrible struggle for mere survival had, as a by-product, a net of tradition which bound the intellect. The finer variations, always more nervously unstable than the tougher sort, were usually crushed out. If they survived, their response to violent stimulation was so harsh and racking that it destroyed them, or removed them from the world of men. This perhaps is the explanation of the praying men of India, of the hermit and the monk.

On the other hand, where the pressure of physical environment was not so violent, a less brutal type was found. The selective influence of milder customs and traditions corresponding to a more refined stimulation, was to choose for approval and survival the refined and intelligent.

CHAPTER III

Education Conserves the Mores

In civilized society we have become accustomed to think of Law, Religion, Art, Education, Music, and War, as distinct fields of human activity. In primitive society these lines of endeavor are not differentiated. Life is a mixed and confused combination of all these things. The process of securing conformity by new generations to ancient lore and established usage, is not thought of as a special activity bearing its own justification. All that the primitive man knows about the matter, is that from time immemorial the one demand of his parents and remoter ancestors has been that he subordinate his thoughts and acts to the precepts of tradition, come down from the past. But besides his own obedience, he must secure the conformity of his children to the same rules and customs. The whole content of ancient usage must be transmitted to the young through and in regulations which affect every minute detail of life. Moreover these customs must be followed explicitly in every act and thought. Any deviation from the prescribed usage might bring down upon the group a terrible and fearful retribution.

Professor Giddings says:

That the dead uniformity of human conduct in savage and barbarian communities is immediately a product of social constraint—largely spontaneous, imitative and unconscious, but also partly conscious and deliberate and only remotely and indirectly a product of environmental constraint, is a fact too

familiar to call for demonstration. By the conscious coöperation of elders in directing the rearing of children by young parents, by organized initiation ceremonies, by clan and tribal councils, each new generation is remorselessly trained in those beliefs, habits and loyalties which the group regards as vital to its existence.[1]

Since social stability was bound up with the conservation of racial traditions and local customs, the young had to be instructed in all fearful and mysterious rites to the end that youthful propensity to do things differently from parental ways might be curbed. That natural yearning after new sensation and that spontaneous reaching-out for a rich variety of experience which characterize youthful years, were regarded by the elders with grave distrust. Primitive and backward peoples seem never to have understood the buoyancy of youth and consequently have always sought to restrain and chasten it.

Among the most significant educational means adopted by primitive peoples to assure continued observance of customs and traditions, are initiation ceremonies. Their object is to introduce the boys into the privileges of manhood and into the full life of the group. At every step they are calculated to impress upon the initiate his own ignorance and helplessness in contrast with the wisdom and power of the group. The mystery with which they are conducted inculcates reverence for the elders and the authorities of the group. The recital of the traditions and the performances of the tribe, the long series of ritual acts, common participation in the mystic dance and song and decorations, serve to reënforce the ties that bind the tribe.

The following selections from Howitt's *Native Tribes of*

[1] "Social Self Control."

South-East Australia, will serve to illustrate this sort of educational process:

The women and children being thus driven together, the old men proceeded to draw from them those boys who were considered to be ripe for initiation. The old men pointed out those who were to be taken, and their *Kabos* seized them and placed them in the front rank of the women. . . .

* * * * * *

The duty of the *Kabos* is to take charge of the boys during the ceremonies. . . .

* * * * * *

The intention of all that is done at this ceremony is to make a momentous change in the boy's life; the past is to be cut off from him by a gulf which he can never re-pass. His connection with his mother as her child is broken off, and he becomes henceforth attached to the men. All the sports and games of his boyhood are to be abandoned with the severance of the old domestic ties between himself and his mother and sisters. He is now to be a man, instructed in and sensible of the duties which devolve upon him as a member of the Murring community. To do all this is partly the object of the ceremonies, and the process by which this is reached is a singular one. The ceremonies are intended to impress and terrify the boy in such a manner that the lesson may be indelible, and may govern the whole of his future life. But the intention is also to amuse in the intervals of the serious rites.

The ceremonies, therefore, are marked by what may be called major and minor stages, and the intervals are filled in by magic dances, by amusing interludes and buffoonery, in which all the men take part, excepting the *Kabos*, whose duty is to unceasingly explain and admonish during the whole ceremony; to point the moral and adorn the tale. . . .

* * * * * *

The ceremonies are also intended to rivet the influence and power of the old men on the novices, who have heard from their earliest childhood tales of the fearful powers of the

Gommeras, and of the *Joïas* by which they can cause sickness and death. At these ceremonies the *Joïas* are exhibited.

* * * * * *

. . . The medicine man then hops backwards and forwards with a staring expression of face, his head vibrates from side to side, and he suddenly shows, sometimes after apparently internal struggles, one of his *Joïas* between his teeth. This is supposed to have been brought from within himself. The other men are meantime dancing round him, and I have occasionally seen him work himself into a kind of ecstatic frenzy, and fall down, once almost into the fire, utterly exhausted. While this was going on, the *Kabos* spoke in earnest tones to their boys, explaining to them the great and deadly powers of the *Gommeras,* and the necessity of their obeying every instruction given them . . .

* * * * * *

. . . and the boy's eyes being still covered, . . . Yibaimalian now came forward in his character of a great medicine man, and first of all gave the tooth a tremendous hoist with his lower jaw, then he put his mouth to that of the boy, who made a tremendous struggle, and got his arms free. Yibai told me afterwards that he then forced one of his *Joïas,* a quartz crystal, up against the tooth to loosen it. The boy, feeling this hard substance coming out of the medicine-man's mouth, thought, as he afterwards told his *Kabo,* that the man was going to kill him by something out of his inside. . . .

As soon as the boy was soothed down, the *Gommera* danced in again and succeeded in getting in a good blow which knocked the tooth out. He struck thirteen blows in all.[1]

Among the tribes of Central Australia initiation ceremonies are regarded as so important a means of transmitting the traditions of the tribe, that the whole tribe devotes itself for three months together to these elaborate functions. The education of the Australian boy includes three sets of ceremonies. When the boy has reached the

[1] Pp. 530-533, 535, and 542.

age of ten or twelve the first ceremony of "throwing up in the air" is performed. Then his nose is bored for a nose-ring. Three or four years later more formidable ceremonies are undertaken. These rites last ten days, during which the boy must not speak except to answer questions. He is pledged to secrecy concerning all that he sees and hears. He is impressed with the importance of obeying the tribal precepts and learns reverence for the superiority of the old men. At the age of from twenty to twenty-five a still more impressive series of ceremonies is conducted which often lasts for several months. In this period there are dances and the churinga or sacred emblems are exhibited. Ceremonies imitating various totem animals are performed. The young man is made to feel his importance and responsibility in this initiation into all the mysteries of the clan. The feeling of reverence which is inculcated for the old men and the sense of pride at the possession of all this mysterious knowledge, tends to develop a deeper sense of unity and tribe cohesion.[1]

"Let us not forget that the immemorial device of stationary societies to preserve their ancient order has been to steep the young in certain traditional wisdom."[2] The purpose of early education in Egypt, India, China, Israel was the shaping of human pulp in rigid traditional mould. The reconciliation of order with progress was not understood or discussed. The method of education, therefore, was so to hypnotize the young with ancient lore, that plasticity of intellect would be destroyed. The free exercise of the mind on religious, ethical, or political matters was made impossible. Youth was to be stung and paralyzed with tradition, "thrown into a mental catalepsy by exclusive contact

[1] Spencer and Gillen, *The Native Tribes of Central Australia*, chs. vii-ix.

[2] Ross, *Social Control* (New York, 1910), p. 165.

with sacred books and classics, edited, interpreted, and, perhaps, even doctored by a priestly caste." [1] For thousands of years the learning by rote of sacred books and laws was justly deemed of great effect in fixing habits of thought and moulding character. Thus saith the Institutes of Menu!

10. By *Sruti,* or *what was heard from above,* is meant the *Véda;* and by *Smriti,* or *what was remembered from the beginning,* the body of law: those two must not be oppugned by heterodox arguments; since from those two, proceeds the whole system of duties.
11. Whenever man of the three highest classes, having addicted himself to heretical books, shall treat with contempt those two roots of law, he must be driven, as an Atheist and a scorner of revelation, from the company of the virtuous.
12. The scripture, the codes of law, approved usage, and, *in all indifferent cases,* self-satisfaction, the wise have openly declared to be the quadruple description of the juridical system.
12. A knowledge of right is sufficient incentive for men unattached to wealth or to sensuality; and to those who seek a knowledge of right, the supreme authority is divine revelation.
14. But, when there are two sacred texts, *apparently inconsistent,* both are held to be law; for both are pronounced by the wise to be valid and reconcilable.[2]

Thus the aim and the effect of early education were to make men torpid and peaceable by making them resigned. They were to accept the social system as they accepted the order of nature. Law and religion were to be clothed with such prestige that the individual should be unable to see over or around them but should bow the head submissively.

[1] Ross, *op. cit.,* p. 169.

[2] *The Institutes of Menu,* vol. ii, ch. ii, pp. 21-22, Jones translation.

Professor Paul Monroe characterizes primitive education as non-progressive adjustment and oriental education as recapitulation.[1] Certainly Chinese education exemplifies recapitulation. The careful regulation of the most minute details of life in the *Li-Ki*, or Book of Rites, of the Confucian text, is one of the best examples of the overreaching of precedent. And as it formed a part of Chinese education, it is one of the clearest illustrations of how education conserves tradition and custom.

1. The sovereign and king orders the chief minister to send down his (lessons of) virtue to the millions of the people.

2. Sons, in serving their parents, on the first crowing of the cock, should all wash their hands, and rinse their mouths, comb their hair, draw over it the covering of silk, fix this with the hair-pin, bind the hair at the roots with the fillet, brush the dust from that which is left free, and then put on their caps, leaving the ends of the strings hanging down. They should then put on their squarely made black jackets, knee-covers, and girdles, fixing in the last their tablets. From the left and right of the girdle they should hang their articles for use:—on the left side, the duster and handkerchief, the knife and whetstone, the small spike and the metal speculum for getting fire from the sun; on the right, the archer's thimble for the thumb and the armlet, the tube for writing instruments, the knife case, the large spike, and the borer for getting fire from wood. They should put on their leggings and adjust their shoe-strings.[2]

Even in the enlightened period of Greek civilization education largely performed the function of perpetuating certain traditions and customs. "In Sparta the state was a great educational institution, and warrior-citizens were de-

[1] Monroe, *Text-Book in the History of Education* (New York, 1905), pp. 1-20.

[2] Müller, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xxvii, p. 449.

liberately turned out according to pattern."[1] The national existence of Sparta depended so entirely on the military effectiveness of her citizens, that Sparta was practically a military camp organized for the training of warriors. The chief occupation of adults, apart from their military life, was the education of the younger generation. Although training was narrow and intense it produced high and permanent results. Beyond the practical military training, intellectual education consisted in committing to memory the Laws of Lycurgus, which had been handed down from one generation to another in verbal form for many centuries. Then came the learning of the national hymns and choruses, and later the poems of a few writers, held in repute.[2] In short, education in as far as it was intellectual, consisted merely in the perpetuation of warlike traditions. And, like most earlier educational processes and many modern ones, the eulogistic recounting of past successes was an important element. Plutarch tells us:

Neither were poetry and music less cultivated among them than a concise dignity of expression. Their songs had a spirit which could rouse the soul, and impel it in an enthusiastic manner to action. The language was plain and manly, the subject serious and moral. For they consisted chiefly of the praises of heroes that had died for Sparta, or else of expressions of detestation for such wretches as had declined the glorious opportunity, and rather chose to drag on life in misery and contempt. Nor did they forget to express an ambition for glory suitable to their respective ages.[3]

In the more enlightened and progressive civilization of

[1] Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

[2] Monroe, *Source Book of the History of Education for the Greek and Roman Period* (New York, 1901), pp. 9-11.

[3] *Life of Lycurgus*, Langhorne translation, p. 206.

Athens, the intellectual or rational element still had relatively little place. The music schools were the chief means by which the state sought to inculcate reverence for the old myths and legends. The study of ancient lore and sacred tradition formed the basis of the mental work in the music schools. It was not intellectual power, but reverence, loyalty and temperance in every word and action that was demanded.[1] Plato's account of the speech of Protagoras on the "Teaching of Morals," describes how reverence, loyalty, and temperance can be secured by training the boy in a spirit of respect for the old myths and legends:

> At a later stage they send him to teachers, and enjoin them to see to his manners even more than to his reading and music; and the teachers do as they are desired. And when the boy has learned his letters and is beginning to understand what is written, as before he understood only what was spoken, they put into his hands the works of great poets, which he reads sitting on a bench at school; in these are contained many admonitions, and many tales, and praises, and encomia of ancient famous men, which he is required to learn by heart, in order that he may imitate or emulate them and desire to become like them. Then, again, the teachers of the lyre take similar care that their young disciple is temperate and gets into no mischief; and when they have taught him the use of the lyre, they introduce him to the poems of other excellent poets, who are lyric poets; and these they set to music, . . .[2]

The Athenian boy spent most of his time not given to the palaestra in these music schools. Here the earlier years of his childhood were devoted to memorizing the Homeric poems, with the addition of portions of Hesiod, and, later

[1] Monroe, *Source Book*, p. 14.

[2] *The Protagoras*, Jowett trans., vol. i, p. 147, 3rd ed.

in the historic period, selections from the lyric and didactic poets. A few years were devoted to the mastery of this literature, wherein the early ideals of Greek life are expressed in a form that had imperishable influence upon each succeeding generation. The boy was then instructed in the correct method of chanting these poems to an accompaniment on the lyre.[1]

At the close of the Persian Wars the mores of the people were changing, and with the advent of a new education the old national songs and the Homeric poems were replaced by the newer literature of a reflective and didactic character.[2] The conflict between the old and the new education constituted a problem, the solution of which Plato intimated might be found in the formation of a new state based on Justice.[3] In the development of this scheme Plato is first to demonstrate the waste engendered by an educational process which consisted largely in the conservation of ancient lore and poetic legend. He says:

> Shall we then permit our children without scruple to hear any fables composed by any authors indifferently, and so to receive into their minds opinions generally the reverse of those which, when they are grown to manhood, we shall think they ought to entertain?
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> * * * * * *
>
> Then apparently our first duty will be to exercise a superintendence over the authors of fables, selecting their good productions and rejecting the bad. . . . But we shall have to repudiate the greater part of those which are now in vogue.
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> * * * * * *
>
> I mean the stories which Hesoid, and Homer, and the other

[1] Monroe, *History of Education*, pp. 90-91.

[2] Monroe, *Source Book*, pp. 51-59.

[3] *The Republic.*

poets, tell us. For they, I imagine, have composed fictitious narratives which they told, and yet tell, to men.

* * * * * *

What is this fault?

It is whenever an author gives a bad representation of the characters of gods and heroes, like a painter whose picture should bear no resemblance to the objects he wishes to imitate.

* * * * * *

Not yet, I continued, is it proper to say in any case—what is indeed untrue—that gods wage war against gods, and intrigue and fight among themselves; that is, if the future guardians of our state are to deem it a most disgraceful thing to quarrel lightly with one another: far less ought we to select as subjects for fiction and embroidery, the battles of the giants, and numerous other feuds of all sorts, in which gods and heroes fight against their own kith and kin. But if there is any possibility of persuading them, that to quarrel with one's fellow is a sin of which no member of a state was ever guilty, such ought rather to be the language held to our children from the first, by old men and old women, and all elderly persons: and such is the strain in which our poets must be compelled to write. But stories like the chaining of Hera by her son, and the flinging of Hephaestus out of heaven for trying to take his mother's part when his father was beating her, and all those battles of the gods which are to be found in Homer, must be refused admittance into our state, whether they be allegorical or not. For the child cannot discriminate between what is allegory and what is not; and whatever at that age is adopted as a matter of belief, has a tendency to become fixed and indelible, and therefore, perhaps, we ought to esteem it of the greatest importance that the fictions which children first hear should be adapted in the most perfect manner to the promotion of virtue.[1]

[1] *The Republic of Plato*, bk. ii, pp. 65-67, in *The Golden Treasury Series*.

Plato clung to the belief that music should be taught in the old Greek sense for training in reverence and a rigid system of morals, but he contended that both music and literature should be closely supervised and censored by rationalistic standards by state officials.[1] This is perhaps one of the first criticisms of the traditional Greek education which bases its objection upon rational grounds.

But in his later works, Plato slips back into the old point of view. Reinforcing the conservatism of age, the disappointments which he had suffered contributed to reëstablish in his mind those traditional sanctions which had been in abeyance; and in *The Laws* Plato does not disguise his admiration for the intolerant Egyptian education:

> Long ago they appear to have recognized the very principle of which we are now speaking—that their young citizens must be habituated to forms and strains of virtue. These they fixed, and exhibited the patterns of them in their temples; and no painter or artist is allowed to innovate upon them, or to leave the traditional forms and invent new ones. To this day, no alteration is allowed either in these arts, or in the music at all. And you find that their works of art are painted or moulded in the same forms which they had ten thousand years ago;—this is literally true and no exaggeration,—their ancient paintings and sculptures are not a whit better or worse than the work of to-day, but are made with just the same skill. . . .
>
> . . . How statesmanlike, how worthy of a legislator! I know that other things in Egypt are not so well. But what I am telling you about music is true and deserving of consideration, because showing that a law giver may institute melodies which have a natural truth and correctness without any fear of failure. . . . For the love of novelty which arises out of pleasure in the new and weariness of the old, has not strength enough to corrupt the consecrated song and dance, under the

[1] Monroe, *History of Education*, p. 136.

plea that they have become antiquated. At any rate, they are far from being corrupted in Egypt.[1]

In another passage, still eulogizing the Egyptian type of education, Plato points out how the risk of innovation should be guarded against. And here he relapses into as complete an acceptance of the traditional doctrine of reverence for antiquity and of the desirability of perpetuating that reverence by educational means, as it is possible to find. He says:

For when they have been brought up in certain laws, which by some Divine Providence have remained unchanged during long ages, so that no one has any memory or tradition of their ever having been otherwise than they are, then every one is afraid and ashamed to change that which is established. The legislator must somehow find a way of implanting this reverence for antiquity, and I would propose the following way:— People are apt to fancy, as I was saying before, that when the plays of children are altered they are merely plays, not seeing that the most serious and detrimental consequences arise out of the change; and they readily comply with the child's wishes instead of deterring him, not considering that these children who make innovations in their games, when they grow up to be men will be different from the last generation of children, and, being different, will desire a different sort of life, and under the influence of this desire will want other institutions and laws; and no one of them reflects that there will follow what I just now called the greatest of evils to states. Changes in bodily fashions are no such serious evils, but frequent changes in the praise and censure of manners are the greatest of evils, and require the utmost prevision.[2]

Then, in the same passage Plato continues to say that

[1] *The Laws*, bk. ii, pp. 34-35, Jowett trans., 3rd. ed.

[2] *Ibid.*, bk. vii, p. 179.

there is no better mode of effecting the desired object than by emulation of the Egyptians, for:

To consecrate every sort of dance or melody. First we should ordain festivals,—calculating for the year what they ought to be, and at what time, and in honor of what Gods, sons of Gods, and heroes, they ought to be celebrated; and, in the next place, what hymns ought to be sung at the several sacrifices, and with what dances the particular festival is to be honored. This has to be arranged at first by certain persons, and, when arranged, the whole assembly of the citizens, are to offer sacrifices and libations to the Fates and all the other Gods, and to consecrate the several odes to Gods and heroes: and if any one offers any other hymns or dances to any one of the Gods, the priests and priestesses, acting in concert with the guardians of the law, shall, with the sanction of religion and law exclude him, and he who is excluded, if he do not submit, shall be liable all his life long to have a suit of impiety brought against him by any one who likes.[1]

It is indicative of the importance of education in Grecian thought that it should form a definite part of the science of politics. Aristotle recognizes the desirability of having the young trained in the spirit of the law.

But of all things which I have mentioned that which most contributes to the permanence of constitutions is the adaptation of education to the form of government. . . . The best laws though sanctioned by every citizen of the state, will be of no avail unless the young are trained by habit and education in the spirit of the constitution. . . .[2]

No one will doubt that the legislator should direct his attention above all to the education of youth, or that the neglect of education does harm to states. The citizen should be moulded

[1] *The Laws*, bk. vii, p. 180.

[2] *Politics*, bk. v, pp. 168-169, Jowett trans.

to suit the form of government under which he lives. For each government has a peculiar character which originally found and which continues to preserve it.[1]

The Directors of Education, as they are termed, should be careful what tales or stories the children hear, for the sports of children are designed to prepare the way for the business of later life, and should be for the most part imitations of the occupations which they will hereafter pursue in earnest.[2]

At a later period we find in a decree from the Athenian Senate that the Ephebi have been diligent in their adherence to the prescribed and traditional element in their education.

. . . and have been regular in their attendance all the year at the gymnasia, and punctually obeyed their Rector, thinking it of paramount importance to observe discipline, and to study diligently what the people has prescribed; . . .

. . . Whereas the People always has a hearty interest in the learning and the discipline of the Ephebi, hoping that the rising generation may grow up to be men able to take good care of their fatherland, and has passed laws to require them to gain a knowledge of the country. . . .[3]

If progressive adjustment and liberality were the watchwords of Greek education, practical training was surely the aim of Roman education. The standards which the Roman youth was expected to approximate were set by living men of distinction, or by well-known historical personages. Although the characteristics of these types set up no exalted ideal, they at least were models worthy of imitation exemplifying the practical virtues of a vigorous, successful people. These qualities appeared in the personal traits of

[1] *Politics*, bk. vii, p. 244.

[2] *Ibid.*, bk. vii, p. 241.

[3] Dumont, *Essai sur L' Éphébie Attique*, Cape's translation, *University Life in Ancient Athens*, p. 21, *et seq.*

the national heroes exalted in the national legends and the poems of the later literature.[1]

Horace recognized the distinction between the ideals of Greek and Roman education: "The Greeks had genius, the Greeks could speak with well-rounded mouth: this was the muse's gift to them; they coveted naught but renown. But the Roman boys are taught to divide the *as* by long calculations into a hundred parts." [2]

The Laws of the Twelve Tables were the basis of instruction in reading, writing, and literary work, for centuries. In the early period they were taught at home and later in the schools when these were established. Besides forming the most important part of the subject-matter of early literary education, the Laws also expressed the ideals which dominated it.[3] Roman education like all that had gone before was the process of conserving traditions.

Cicero was profuse in his praise of the Laws of the Twelve Tables as representing all that was desirable as material for intellectual education:

> Though all the world exclaim against me, I will say what I think: that single little book of the Twelve Tables, if any one look at the fountains and sources of laws, seems to me, assuredly, to surpass the libraries of all philosophers, both in weight of authority, and in the plentitude of utility. . . . Its spirit, customs, and discipline ought to be our first objects of study, both because our country is the parent of us all, and because as much wisdom must be thought to have been employed in framing such laws, as in establishing so vast and powerful an empire.[4]

[1] Monroe, *History of Education*, p. 183.

[2] *Ars Poetica*, 323-333, p. 214, Lonsdale and Lee prose trans.

[3] Monroe, *Source Book*, p. 331.

[4] *De Oratore*, bk. i, ch. xliv, Watson trans.

Professor Monroe finds that imitation is one of the most important characteristics of Roman education.[1] The method of old Roman education was essentially that of the apprentice system. The youth learned by observation and direct imitation of the master, in the army, at the farm, and in the courts of the forum. Besides the mastering of the Twelve Tables and various exercises in calculation, literary education included the acquisition of national hymns and legends.[2] The traditional element had the dominant place as usual in intellectual training.

Roman educational history may be divided into two great periods: one, wherein its ideas and practices were all purely Roman; the other, in which the Greek influence was prominent and education became of a composite or cosmopolitan character.[3]

The rise of the schools of the Latin Rhetoricians had to face the hostility of all the old educational traditions and customs in the Roman mores of that time. Education conserved certain mores of the people. The new ideas appearing with the rise of the rhetorical schools occasioned suspicion. Suetonius writes of a decree of the senate against them about 161 B. C.:

It is reported to us that certain persons have instituted a new kind of discipline; that our youth resort to their schools; that they have assumed the title of Latin Rhetoricians; and that young men waste their time there for whole days together. Our ancestors have ordained what instruction it is fitting their children to receive, and what schools they should attend. These novelties, contrary to the customs and instructions of our ancestors, we neither approve, nor do they appear to us

[1] Monroe, *History of Education*, p. 189.

[2] Monroe, *Source Book*, p. 359.

[3] Monroe, *History of Education*, p. 191.

good. Wherefore it appears to be our duty that we should notify our judgment both to those who keep such schools, and those who are in the practice of frequenting them, that they meet our disapprobation.[1]

However, by slow degrees, rhetoric manifested itself to be a useful and honorable study, and many persons devoted themselves to it, both as a means of defense and of acquiring reputation.[2]

But these new schools still drew heavily upon the material of tradition, for: "They had occasion to support the authority of fabulous accounts, and to detract from that of historical narratives, which sort the Greeks call 'Propositions', 'Refutations' and 'Corroborations'." [3]

In the looseness which characterized the mores of Roman plutocracy, the importance of conserving traditions was lost sight of. Plautus writes:

. . . clad in your belted frock, upon a stool by your master would you sit; *and* there, when you were reading your book, if you made a mistake in a single syllable, your skin would be made as spotted as your nurse's gown. . . .

But now-a-days, before he is seven years old, if you touch a boy with your hand, at once the child breaks his tutor's head with his tablet.[4]

But the old Roman virility was continued into the later imperial period in the form of Stoic Philosophy. Marcus Aurelius is thankful:

. . . that when I had inclination to philosophy, I did not fall into the hands of any sophists, and that I did not waste

[1] *The Lives of Eminent Rhetoricans*, p. 524, Thomson trans.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 524-525.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 525.

[4] *The Bacchides of Plautus*, Act iii, Sc. iii, pp. 173-174, Riley trans.

any time on writers [of histories] or in the resolution of syllogisms, or occupy myself about the investigation of appearances in the heavens: for all these things require the help of the gods and fortune.[1]

Pliny the Younger writes of what is desirable for an instrutor to teach.

Your son will hear nothing from this worthy man but what will be to his advantage to know, nor will he learn anything of which it would be better he were ignorant. He will remind him as often, and with as much zeal as you or I should, of the virtues of his ancestors, and what a glorious weight of illustrious characters he has to support.[2]

Throughout all of these selections we recognize the element of tradition and usage. The eulogistic study of the past and the resulting necessity to emulate one's ancestors and to follow in their footsteps, seem the motives of educational policy, which is carried out by requiring the new generation to sing the praises of the past as embodied in the poems and hymns, to learn the national legends and myths, and to observe the precepts of ancient lore. In this manner a reverential attitude towards the past is made a habit of mind.

Horace writes of the substance of early literary education:

The tender lisping mouth of a child the poet forms; even in their earlier days he turns the ears of the young from evil words; presently he fashions the heart by kindly precepts; he is the corrector of roughness, of malice, of anger; he tells of virtuous deeds, the dawn of life he furnishes with illus-

[1] *The Thoughts of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antonius*, ch. i, 17, p. 77, Long trans., 2nd. ed.

[2] *Epistles of Pliny the Younger*, bk. iii, epistle iii, to Correllia Hispulla, p. 78, Bosanquet trans.

trious examples; the helpless and sad of soul he comforts. Whence could the pious boys and virgins learn their hymns of prayer, had not the muse granted us a bard? The chorus prays for aid, and Heaven's presence feels, and in set form of persuasive prayer implores rain from above, averts disease, drives away dreaded dangers, obtains peace, and a season rich in its crops: appeased by hymns are gods above, and gods below.[1]

But Horace did not accept all eulogism:

When I was little, Orbilius, my master, dictated to me the poems of Livius; he was fond of flogging me, but I am not dead set against those poems, nor think they ought to be destroyed: but that they should be considered faultless and beautiful and almost perfect, does astonish me.[2]

When Rome became uneasy in the later days of the republic and the people regarded luxury and glitter as desirable assets, the polished and eloquent orator became the idealized educated Roman. Like habits of elegance and ease were in the mores of the classes.

For when our empire over all nations was established, and after a period of peace had secured tranquillity, there was scarcely a youth ambitious of praise who did not think he must strive, with all his endeavors to attain the art of speaking.[3]

For who is ignorant that the highest power of an orator consists in exciting the minds of men to anger, or to hatred, or to grief, or in recalling them from these more violent emotions to gentleness and compassion? Which power will never be able to effect its object by eloquence, unless in him who has obtained a thorough insight into the nature of mankind, and all

[1] *The Epistles*, bk. ii, p. 192, Lonsdale and Lee trans.

[2] *Ibid.*, bk. ii, pp. 70-75.

[3] *De Oratore of Cicero*, bk. i, ch. iv, Watson trans.

the passions of humanity, and those causes by which our minds are either impelled or restrained.[1]

The poets must also be studied: an acquaintance must be formed with history; the writers and teachers in all the liberal arts and sciences must be read, and turned over, and must, for the sake of exercise, be praised, interpreted, corrected, censured, refuted; you must dispute on both sides of every question; . . . The civil law must be thoroughly studied, laws in general must be understood; all antiquity must be known; the usages of the senate, the nature of our government, the rights of our allies. . . .[2]

Quintilian describes the formal institutional education of the public schools of a later time and gives his opinion regarding the subject-matter of elementary education.[3] He says:

I would express a wish that even the lines which are set him for his imitation in writing, should not contain useless sentences, but such as convey some moral instruction. The remembrance of such admonitions will attend him to old age, and will be of use even for the formation of his character. It is possible for him, also, to learn the sayings of eminent men, and select passages from the poets (for the reading of poets is more pleasing to the young).[4]

It has accordingly been an excellent custom, that reading should commence with *Homer* and *Virgil,* although, to understand their merits, there is need of maturer judgment. . . . In the meantime let the mind of the pupil be exalted with the sublimity of the heroic verse, conceive ardor from the magnitude of the subjects, and be imbued with the noblest sentiments. The reading of *tragedies* is beneficial; the *lyric poets* nourish the mind, provided you select from them, not merely

[1] *De Oratore of Cicero,* bk. i, ch. xii.

[2] *Ibid.,* bk. i, ch. xxxiv.

[3] Monroe, *Source Book,* pp. 448-449.

[4] *Institutes of Oratory,* bk. i, ch. i, 35-36, Watson trans.

authors, but portions of their works; for the Greeks are licentious in many of their writings.[1]

Music, however, by means of the tone and modulation of the voice, expresses sublime thoughts with grandeur, pleasant ones with sweetness, and ordinary ones with calmness, and sympathies in its whole art with the feelings attendant on what is expressed.[2]

The key word of education in the Middle Ages was discipline. Discipline in moral, spiritual, social, and intellectual activities, but discipline that was always overshadowed by the asceticism of the medieval church. The education of the young fell to the church and no systematic lay teaching was permitted. Instruction was by catechisms and consisted largely in the rudiments of religion. Education became the process of intolerant perpetuation of the narrowest Christian traditions. All liberality was stifled in the monotonous repetition of religious rites and ceremonies.

That education should then necessarily have been narrow and restricted in its subject-matter can well be understood when we call to mind the character of this time of which Professor Sumner says:

The period entirely lacked historical sense and critical method. What it had received from the last preceding generation was, and must have been always. But that was the mores. Horror of heretics, witches, Mohammedans, Jews, was in them, and so were all the other intense faiths, loves, desires, hates, and efforts of the period. In the lack of reading, travel, and discussion there was very little scepticism. Life went on from day to day by repetition along the grooves of usage and habit. Such life makes strong mores, but also rigid and mechanical ones.[3]

[1] *Institutes of Oratory*, bk. i, ch. viii, 5-6. [2] *Ibid.*, ch. x, 24.

[3] "Religion and the Mores," *Pub. Amer. Sociological Society*, vol. iv, p. 14.

Yet life in the early Christian church had been a schooling of very great importance. It was in one sense a reaction against the corrupt society of the pagan centuries. As such, it was of course an intensely religious education. It possessed little intellectual content. It was during this period that the character of education for a thousand years after the Christianization of the Roman Empire was shaped.[1] To gain an insight into the spirit of intolerance for anything that suggested the intellectual we have but to read the following passage from Tertullian's "Prescription Against Heretics":[2]

These are the doctrines of man and of demons produced for the itching ears of the spirit of this world's wisdom; this the Lord called "foolishness", and chose even the foolish things of this world to confound even philosophy itself. For philosophy is the material of the world's wisdom and rash interpreter of the nature and dispensation of God. Indeed heresies themselves are instigated by philosophy. . . . What concord is there between the Academy and the Church? . . . Away with all attempts to produce a mottled christianity of Stoic, Platonic, and didactic composition.

The strict traditional teaching of the Catechism and the Scriptures in the Catechumenal Schools, the Catechetical Schools and later in the Episcopal and Cathedral Schools, permitted little intellectual training. The allegorical method of interpretation used by the Greeks to explain trivial, irrational, or immoral acts, in order to give them a rational or moral meaning, was adopted by Philo and it spread through Judaic education. The Christians were not slow in making use of the device. Allegory became the great

[1] Monroe, *History of Education*, p. 230.

[2] In *The Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church*, vol. x, pp. 440-442.

contrivance by means of which the Church justified the Old Testament to Greek thought.[1]

But we must remember that:

In monasticism the education of the early Church finds its culmination and perpetuation. From the sixth century to the thirteenth, save for the cathedral schools,—which during the greater part of this period were in a state of but minor activity and even then taught for the most part by monks,—there was in Western Europe no other education containing any intellectual element. Again, since in the activities of the friars the work of the early universities is largely included, for three additional centuries this type of monasticism continued to be the most important single educational institution.[2]

The Benedictine Rule and the later Monkish rules constituted a mass of detailed regulations for all the activities of monastic life which were almost as arbitrary and monotonous as the regulations of a Confucian text. In the Benedictine Rule we read concerning how many Psalms are to be said in the night:

In winter time, having first said the verse, "O God make speed to save me, O Lord make haste to help me," secondly there must be said thrice, "O Lord, open Thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth Thy praise," to which is to be subjoined Psalm iii, and a *Gloria*. After this, Psalm xciv (E. V. Ps. xcv), with an antiphon, or at any rate be chanted. Then let there follow the Ambrosian Hymn (*Æterne Rerum*), then six Psalms with their antiphons; which being finished and the verse said, let the Abbat give benediction, and, all sitting in their stalls, let these be read by the brethren in turn from a book set upon the lectern, three lessons between which let three responds be sung. Let two responds be said without

[1] Monroe, *op. cit.*, pp. 224-233.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 244.

the *Gloria;* but often the third lesson let him who sings say the *Gloria,* which when the cantor begins to say at once let all rise from the seats out of honor and reverence to the most Holy Trinity.

Now let there be read on Vigils as well the books of the Old Testament as of the New of Divine authority; and, moreover, those expositions of them which have been made by the most celebrated and orthodox and Catholic Fathers. And after these three lessons, with their responds, let there follow the remaining six Psalms, to be sung with "Alleluia". After these let there follow the lecture out of an Apostle, to be recited by heart, and a verse and the supplication of the Litany—that is, the *Kyrie Eleison.* And thus let the night Vigils end.[1]

What intellectual instruction there was in the monasteries besides the customary study of the Scriptures, consisted in the arts of reading, writing, and the calculation of the church calendar.[2]

In the higher fields of learning we hear the voice of Abelard protesting against the deadening and undiscriminating transmission of church tradition. Abelard makes free to come forward in his "Yea and Nay" with criticism of the custom of accepting the writings of the church Fathers as implicit truth. He points out the many contradictions and obscurities in their innumerable writings. Respect for their authority should not stand in the way of an effort on the part of the student to arrive at the truth. Therefore all these writings should be read with full freedom of criticism and with no obligation to accept unquestionably; otherwise the way to all discussion would be blocked.[3]

[1] *The Rule of St. Benedict,* The Church Press Co. Reprinted from the Church Review (London, 1866), ch. ix, pp. 17-18.

[2] Monroe, *op. cit.,* pp. 257-259.

[3] McCabes, *Abelard.*

Even the early aggregations of masters and scholars at Paris, Oxford, and Bologna, did not long offer a free market for instruction. Higher education was fated to come under the social ban as long as it persisted in concerning itself with criticism of sacred usage rather than with the transmission of holy tradition. Free discussion and criticism appeared to endanger the conservation of established custom. The habitual function of education seemed about to be endangered. So it was not long before intellectual traffic was meddled with, and "by hook or crook, a regulative finger was laid upon the windpipe of learning." The result was that "By bulls, charters, or licenses to teach, the old free university, which had originated independently alike of civil and papal authority, was brought under the central organs of control." In this way the perpetuation of tradition and custom was again assured and "the university itself became a close corporation, fitted in due time by its timid sense of responsibility and its conservative temper to become a pillar of order." [1]

In the period of the Reformation elementary school education began to receive great attention. The people must be able to read in order that the Bible might be interpreted by the individual conscience. At the same time the Jesuits perfected a system of secondary education based on the Greek and Latin classics. These two movements in educational advance were essentially concerned with the transmission of those traditional elements of intellectual training which each sect thought it important to preserve as contributing to the future maintenance of their respective social orders.

Professor Ross regards the traditional classical education founded by the Jesuits as:

[1] Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

a most interesting device of control over the middle and ruling classes. For a pyramidal society putting a severe strain on obedience, the safest and best education is one that wears away the energy of youth in mental gymastics, directs the glance toward the past, cultivates the memory rather than the reason, gives polish rather than power, encourages acquiescence rather than inquiry, and teaches to versify rather than to think. It is natural that teachers in meeting such requirements should construct a system that favors the humanities rather than the sciences, literature and language rather than history, and the forms of literature rather than the substance.[1]

With the spread of the democratic idea in more recent times, the aim of education has undergone further modification.[2] Although the old function of transmitting tradition is still the *raison d'être* of education, the content of the traditions to be conserved is more carefully scrutinized. Moreover, the sanction behind them is slowly shifting from pure precedent to reason. Education has become increasingly intellectual. The teaching of the common school has taken on an intellectual bias, not because it was particularly demanded, but probably because the sects in their mutual jealousy have gradually canceled out of public education nearly all religious instruction.[3] And so, more by accident than by design, public school education has tended to become an aid to individual success rather than the old type-forming instrument of society. Webster voiced this somewhat different aim of education in these democratic times, when he said:

On the diffusion of education among the people rests the preservation and perpetuation of our free institutions. I ap-

[1] Ross, *op. cit.*, pp. 171-172.

[2] Butler, *The Meaning of Education* (New York, 1898), pp. 108-109.

[3] Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

prehend no danger to our country from a foreign foe. . . . Our destruction, should it come at all, will be from another quarter. From the inattention of the people to the concerns of the government, from their carelessness and negligence. I confess I do apprehend some danger. I fear that they may place too implicit confidence in their public servants, and fail properly to scrutinize their conduct; that in this way they may be made the dupes of designing men and become the instruments of their undoing. Make them intelligent and they will be vigilant; give them the means of detecting the wrong and they will apply the remedy.[1]

Summing up this all too brief review of the literature of certain periods in the history of education two general conclusions stand forth.

One is, that historically, education has functioned as a conserver of tradition and custom. But when we consider the content of the traditions and customs conserved by educational means in primitive times and in backward civilizations, we must admit that education has perpetuated superstition and prejudice. The antiquity of man as now understood, means that modern civilization, even if we date its beginning some three thousand years ago to the rise of the Greek culture, is but a small and relatively recent period in the history of mankind. During all the ages of savagery which antedated the earliest Greek culture, the educational process must have concerned itself with the conservation of traditions, the content of which we would now regard as superstition. In this sense then, the educational process throughout most of its history has been anything but the means of spreading enlightenment.

The other general conclusion relates to the question: what determined the traditions which education conserved?

[1] *Plymouth Oration.*

The answer appears to be that they were determined by the mores of the time, that the non-progressive adjustment which was the aim of primitive education was a product of the mores of primitive peoples. The lore of their ancestors was infallible. Social usage was fixed. And the mores of that time contained traditional matter of a most irrational sort, but they were correct and proper customs and had to conserved. The mores of backward civilization, of which China was taken as a type, are essentially tough and unyielding. They contained all manner of absurdities and useless acts but they had the sanction of deep-seated social habit.[1] The mores of the Greeks were more plastic and tolerant and education therefore became a progressive and a liberal training.[2] The Romans were a practical people. Their mores were practical. Education became a practical training. But when the mores of Rome became lax in the later Empire, education aimed to conserve those intellectual elements of tradition which lent polish and elegance rather than sound ability.[3] Hence the ideal of the Roman educated man became the orator. During the dark period of the Middle Ages the mores were a confusion of conflicting elements. Discipline was in them because only by strict rules in morals and religion could one find peace in that turmoil. Hence education was moral, spiritual, or religious discipline as the case happened. In one and all of these periods education conserved certain mores.

The mores which education conserved were not always the same mores. Sometimes education tended to conserve the mores of the masses of the people and again it tended to conserve the mores of classes. Variation was determined

[1] Sumner, *Folkways*, pp. 71-73.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 104-106.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 100-103.

by the size and complexity of the group. Small and homogeneous groups of kindred perpetuated mores of the whole clan by initiation ceremonies. Every male child was initiated and trained in a spirit of reverence for the elders of the clan before he could be a full-fledged member. In larger and more complex groups, organized education conserved the mores of the dominant class. In Sparta, all acts and thoughts were subordinated to the work of developing warriors. Consequently education conserved in the main the mores of the Spartan people. In Athens, we see a gradual narrowing down of the mores conserved. The educated classes grew relatively smaller. Organized education tended more and more to be the luxury of aristocratic classes. Roman education began with the conservation of mores of the whole people. The laws of the Twelve Tables were taught at home and in the schools. In the time of the Empire, when Hellenic influence dominated instruction, organized education sought to conserve certain intellectual elements in the mores of the upper classes. The same narrowing-down process that we observed in Greece occurred in Rome. Certain mores of the classes composed the traditional matter that organized education conserved. The masses were largely neglected. In Medieval times, organized education was confined to the training of the monks within the monasteries. Habits of mind characteristic of a restricted class were perpetuated. University teaching of later medieval times was a process of preserving certain mores of a highly-selected class. With the Renaissance, organized education reached larger numbers. Protestant elementary education and Jesuit secondary school education conserved certain mores of sects. Class mores were still the dominant interest in organized education. The sons of gentlemen were the favored few. Thus it has been that organized education has tended often to conserve the

mental habits of classes rather than the mental habits of the masses of the people.

In modern times, the field of organized education has been enormously extended. The interests of life have been multiplied and complicated by practical applications of science and the general economic development. All classes feel the pressure of increasing demand for a better intellectual training of their youth. Although organized education continues to put its emphasis on the conservation of certain mores of the classes, great elementary school systems have been developed to reach the masses of the people.

In America, education was first insisted on for religious reasons. Life was simple and the population was homogeneous. Education had been the luxury of the gentlemanly class. By 1835 there began to be a change in the attitude of society towards many questions.[1] After disclosures of corruption in public life, the need of an educated electorate began to be felt. The principle of tax-supported schools was generally accepted in all the Northern states by 1850. Public education became a national interest. But the common schools provided only a most rudimentary training in the three R's. There was little liberal element in the curriculum. From 1875 to 1900[2] there were many changes in the methods of common school education. Liberal subjects began to crowd the old disciplinary material in response to social demands from without the school. Drawing was introduced at the petition of Massachusetts business men. Manual training was introduced after the exhibit of the Russian government at the Centennial Exhibition of 1876. Laboratory instruction, music, and elementary sci-

[1] E. P. Cubberley, *Changing Conceptions of Education*, (Boston, 1909), p. 32 *et seq.*

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 40, *et seq.*

ence, were added in the course of time. These innovations were dubbed "fads and frills" by the conservative element. But they came to stay because they met new needs arising out of our complex social conditions. The ethnic heterogeneity of our population has been an important cause of the complete secularization of the school. The religious element which was originally dominant has almost entirely disappeared. "The need of broad, general, and diversified training, adapted to the needs of the future rather than to the needs of the present or past, becomes more evident." [1]

There is great need for the elementary school to cultivate the critical habit of mind in its pupils. This can only be done by insisting on accuracy and a rational control of all processes and methods, and the holding of everything open to unlimited verification and revision. "The critical habit of thought, if usual in a society, will pervade all its mores, because it is a way of taking up the problems of life. Men educated in it cannot be stampeded by stump orators and are never deceived by dithyrambic oratory." [2]

Therefore while education conserves tradition in the general sense, in the more particular sense it aims to conserve certain mores of a time and place, whatever they may be.[3]

Before making an intensive study of the curricula of our elementary schools in the effort to find there concrete evidence in support of this thesis, the writer wishes to cite certain passages from the works of prominent educational-

[1] E. P. Cubberley, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

[2] Sumner, *op. cit.*, p. 633.

[3] Professor Dutton says in *Social Phases of Education in the School and the Home*, p. 39, "The education required for any age is determined by the character of that age. Human needs change and ideals of manhood and womanhood are modified, so the methods employed in training the young at any particular time will receive an impress and a sanction from the social conditions of that time."

ists and scientists which recognize the truth of the contentions herein made.

President Butler in his book on *The Meaning of Education*, says:

For now we all understand perfectly well that this long period of infancy and adaptation, this period of plasticity and education, is that which makes progress possible. That is why it is entirely correct to say that each generation is the trustee of civilization. Each generation owes it to itself and to its posterity to protect its culture, to enrich it and to transmit it. The institution that mankind has worked out for that purpose is the institution known as education. When a child has entered into this inheritance, first physical, then scientific, literary, aesthetic, institutional, and religious, then we use the word culture to signify the state that has been attained.[1]

President Vincent in *The Social Mind and Education*, says:

The function of transmitting from one generation to the next the contents of the collective tradition has itself been characterized by increasing social self-consciousness. Beginning in the haphazard communication of empirical knowledge, dexterities, customs, and beliefs from parents to children, instruction has been more and more socialized and organized until in the great educational systems of modern nations, societies purposefully seek to secure the orderly transmission and constant enrichment of the collective knowledge, feelings, and volitions, which, realized in individual consciousness, form the content of the social mind. In general, education may be regarded from the social point of view as a reflective effort to preserve the continuity and to secure the growth of common tradition. Just as the successive stages of consciousness in the individual form a coherent unity with which self or personality is associated, so society gains unity and self-conscious-

[1] P. 32.

ness from a well-organized and continuous collective tradition which therefore constitutes the essential vital principle of the social organism. Since the social mind can exist only in the minds of individuals, society seeks its own perpetuation and advancement by preparing the young gradually to appropriate the collective tradition in general, and by training a few minds to receive and elaborate its various highly specialized divisions. Thus, though individuals are constantly dying and others are taking their places, the social tradition not only persists but is progressively analyzed and synthesized, growing ever deeper and richer in truth, aesthetic and moral feeling, ideas, and aims. Education seeks, therefore, to relate individual consciousness intrinsically to the social mind. The social organism is in final analysis a psychic organism.[1]

In *My Pedagogic Creed*, Professor John Dewey says:

I believe that all education proceeds by the participation of the individual in the social consciousness of the race. This process begins unconsciously almost at birth, and is continually shaping the individual's powers, saturating his consciousness, forming his habits, training his ideas, and arousing his feelings and emotions. Through this unconscious education the individual gradually comes to share in the intellectual and moral resources which humanity has succeeded in getting together. He becomes an inheritor of the funded capital of civilization.[2]

I believe that education is a regulation of the process of coming to share in the social consciousness; and that the adjustment of individual activity on the basis of social consciousness is the only sure method of social reconstruction.[3]

In his text-book on *The History of Education*, Professor Paul Monroe says:

The problem of education is to transmit to each succeeding

[1] Pp. 91-92. [2] P. 5. [3] P. 16.

generation the elements of culture and of institutional life that have been found to be of value in the past, with that additional increment of culture which the existing generation has succeeded in working out for itself; to do this, and also to give to each individual the fullest liberty in forming his own purposes in life and in shaping these to his own activities.

. . . The problem of the school is to take the material selected by the educator to incorporate it into the life of each member of the coming generation so as to fit him into the social life of the times. . . .[1]

President James H. Baker, of the University of Colorado, said:

Certainly the belief in accumulated heredity is widespread, and nothing but scientific demonstration will overthrow it. In the meantime, even if Weismannism be true, the accumulated culture of the race is transmissible from generation to generation through education, and this fact strengthens the faith of the optimist.[2]

Whether Weismann's view or Spencer's of heredity be true, we may be sure that widespread education pays, because the accumulated traditions and stores of knowledge are transmissible, if not by heredity, then at least by education and social atmosphere.[3]

In *The Fifth Year-book of the National Herbart Society*, I. W. Howerth writes:

Looking at the distribution of knowledge from the societary point of view, it is obvious that it must ever be a function of education to conserve the past accumulation of knowledge, to preserve and distribute our intellectual heritage.[4]

[1] P. 758.

[2] In *The Investigations of the Department of Psychology and Education, The University of Colorado*, vol. i, no. 3, p. 4, 1903.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

[4] P. 80.

CHAPTER IV

The Importance and the Extent of the Mores

Because our mental content is largely determined by what our forefathers believed to be necessary for "right living," we forget that tradition and custom have become the norm by which we judge our individual experiences. Accordingly new observations and thoughts are transmitted to the child as traditional matter, much as folklore is.[1] Consequently new perceptions, in the child's mind, are associated with the mass of traditional material and are interpreted by it. This in part is why it is a mistake to assume that interpretation of life by each civilized individual is a logical process. Interpretation of external things is never purely *naive* and *original*. The content of the mind, largely determined by social usage and conventions of class and time, refracts impression, and so determines final form.[2]

When we compare the modes of life of different nations,

[1] Boas, "The Mind of Primitive Man," p. 6.

[2] "We are only too apt . . . to forget entirely the general, and, for the most of us, purely traditional, theoretical basis which is the foundation of our reasoning, and to assume that the result of our reasoning is absolute truth. In this we commit the same error that is committed, and has been committed, by all the less civilized peoples. They are more easily satisfied than we are at the present time, but they also assume as true the traditional element which enters into their explanations, and therefore accept as absolute truth the conclusions based on it." *Ibid.*, p. 8.

and contrast civilized man with primitive man, we cannot fail to observe how many of our actions are determined by traditional associations. The whole range of our daily life is unconscious adherence to custom. We can give no logical or physiological reason why we eat three meals a day and feel displeasure if we miss one. Many people eat two meals a day and some eat four. Why is it that we do not eat dogs, cats, or horses? Our aversion cannot be accounted for on other grounds than those of custom, since many people regard dogs and horses as rare dainties.[1] Consider our mode of dress: any departure from the style of the day brings ridicule upon the offender. Public appearance in the garb of ancient Greece has recently received the mark of public disapproval and the offence was treated as within the police power. Custom is the autocrat also of table manners.

To smack one's lips is considered decidedly bad style, and may even excite feelings of disgust: while among the Indians, for instance, it would be considered as in exceedingly bad taste not to smack one's lips when one is invited to dinner, because it would suggest that the guest does not enjoy his dinner. The whole range of actions that are considered as proper and improper cannot be explained by any logical reason, but are almost all entirely due to custom: that is to say, they are purely traditional. This is even true of the customs which excite strong emotions, as, for instance, those produced by infractions of modesty.[2]

Definite instances, however, in which divergence in proper actions is considerable are not hard to find. Professor Boas notes an interesting one as follows:

Among ourselves it is considered proper and a matter of course to treat the old with respect, for children to look after

[1] Boas, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

the welfare of their aged parents; and not to do so would be considered base ingratitude. Among the Eskimo we find an entirely different standard. It is required of children to kill their parents when they have become so old as to be helpless and no longer of any use to the family or to the community. It would be considered a breach of filial duty not to kill the aged parent. Revolting though this custom may seem to us, it is founded on the ethical law of the Eskimo, which rests on the whole mass of traditional lore and custom.[1]

Other customs of other peoples and other times appear equally strange to us:

Some Australian girls consider that their honor requires that they shall be knocked senseless and carried off by the men who thereby become their husbands. If they are the victims of violence, they need not be ashamed. Eskimo girls would be ashamed to go away with husbands without crying and lamenting, glad as they are to go. They are shocked to hear that European women publicly consent in church to be wives, and then go with their husbands without pretending to regret it. In Homer, girls are proud to be bought and to bring their fathers a bride price of many cows.[2]

Professor Sumner has called this mass of custom and traditional material controlling our acts—the Folkways. They originate, no man knows just when or how. Men do not reflect upon them until long after they have become established. Then attention is drawn to them only when the smooth stream of social consciousness is broken into by some circumstance which sets up a new model of imitation that seems fundamentally opposed to all that is established. Sumner says:

all the life of human beings, in all ages and stages of culture,

[1] Boas, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

[2] Sumner, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

is primarily controlled by a vast mass of folkways handed down from the earliest existence of the race, having the nature of the ways of other animals, only the topmost layers of which are subject to change and control, and have been somewhat modified by human philosophy, ethics, and religion, or by other acts of intelligent reflection.[1]

The folkways, therefore, are not creations of human purpose and wit. They are like products of natural forces which men unconsciously set in operation, or they are like the instinctive ways of animals, which are developed out of experience, which reach a final form of maximum adaptation to an interest, which are handed down by tradition and admit of no exception or variation, yet change to meet new conditions, still within the same limited methods, and without rational reflection or purpose.[2]

The operation by which folkways are produced consists in the frequent repetition of petty acts, often by great numbers acting in consort or, at least, acting in the same way when face to face with the same need. The immediate motive is interest. It produces habit in the individual and custom in the group. It is, therefore, in the highest degree original and primitive. By habit and custom it exerts a strain on every individual within its range; therefore it rises to a societal force to which great classes of societal phenomena are due.[3]

The process of making the folkways is never superseded or changed. It goes on now just as it did at the beginning of civilization. "Use and wont" exert their force on all men always. They produce familiarity, and mass acts become unconscious.[4]

All this goes to illustrate the fact, taught by Anthropology, that man the world over believes that he follows the dictates of his reason no matter how unreasonable his acts

[1] Sumner, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 4.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 3.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 35.

may be. The knowledge that there exists a tendency in the human mind to arrive at conclusions first and to give reasons afterwards will throw light upon many obscure things. It helps us to realize that our philosophic views and our political convictions are so largely determined by our emotional inclinations that the reasons we give are not the reasons by which we arrive at our conclusions, but generally only the explanations which we give for our conclusions.[1]

Out of the folkways develop the mores. The mores always represent the struggle to live as well as possible under the conditions. They are a vast and complex mass of acts and thoughts of mixed quality. They are the folkways which have survived and which at any given time constitute the sanction behind the acts and thoughts of that time and place. Professor Sumner describes them as follows:

The mores come down to us from the past. Each individual is born into them as he is born into the atmosphere, and he does not reflect on them, or criticise them any more than a baby analyzes the atmosphere before he begins to breathe it. Each one is subjected to the influence of the mores, and formed by them, before he is capable of reasoning about them. It may be objected that now-a-days, at least, we criticise all traditions, and accept none just because they are handed down to us. If we take up cases of things which are still entirely or almost entirely in the mores, we shall see that this is not so. There are sects of free-lovers amongst us who want to discuss pair marriage. They are not simply people of evil life. They invite us to discuss rationally our inherited customs and ideas as to marriage, which they say, are by no means so excellent and elevated as we believe. They have never won any serious attention. Some others want to argue in favor of polygamy on grounds of expediency. They fail to obtain a hearing. Others want to discuss property. In spite

[1] Boas, "Anthropology", p. 27.

of some literary activity on their part, no discussion of property, bequest, and inheritance has ever been opened. Property and marriage are in the mores. Nothing can ever change them but the unconscious and imperceptible movement of the mores. Religion was originally a matter of the mores. It became a societal institution and a function of the state. It has now to a great extent been put back into the mores. Since laws with penalties to enforce religious creeds or practices have gone out of use, any one may think and act as he pleases about religion. Therefore it is not now "good form" to attack religion. Infidel publications are now tabooed by the mores, and are more effectually repressed than ever before. They produce no controversy. Democracy is in our American mores. It is a product of our physical and economic conditions. It is impossible to discuss or criticise it. It is glorified for popularity, and is a subject of dithyrambic rhetoric. No one treats it with complete candor and sincerity. No one dares to analyze it as he would aristocracy or autocracy. He would get no hearing and would only incur abuse. The thing to be noticed in all these cases is that the masses oppose a deaf ear to every argument against the mores. It is only in so far as things have been transferred from the mores into laws and positive institutions that there is discussion about them or rationalizing upon them. The mores contain the norm by which, if we should discuss the mores, we should have to judge the mores. We learn the mores as unconsciously as we learn to walk and eat and breathe. The masses never learn how we walk, and eat, and breathe, and they never know any reason why the mores are what they are. The justification of them is that when we wake to consciousness of life we find them facts which already hold us in the bonds of tradition, custom, and habit. The mores contain embodied in them notions, doctrines, and maxims, but they are facts. They are in the present tense. They have nothing to do with what ought to be, will be, may be, or once was, if it is not now.[1]

[1] Sumner, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-77.

Until there is contact with another society, a group is never conscious of its mores.[1] Sometimes, however, a society gets information of is mores by literature after it has attained a higher civilization. But the latter never affects more than the literary classes and the masses of society never consciously set about the task of making mores. The mores grow up, grow strong, become corrupt, decline, and die, as if they were organisms. In later stages they tend to be rigid although in the earlier stages they were elastic and plastic. Phases of change in the mores follow one another as if independent of reason or will, but are in fact produced by a strain towards better adjustment to the conditions and interests of society, or of the controlling elements in it. A society does not record its mores because they are unnoticed and unconscious.

Throughout this discussion the writer uses the term mores in a somewhat more restricted sense than Professor Sumner's and more closely follows distinctions made by Professor Giddings. The mores are folkways which the community partly unconsciously by the folkway method but partly consciously or reflectively has selected from amongst the whole mass of folkways to be preserved and having selected preserves by inculcation or teaching. They are the folkways which came into existence unconsciously, but which survive in part through conscious preference and approval. And in Professor Sumner's own words—"The mores contain the norm by which, if we should discuss the mores, we should have to judge the mores."[2]

The religious mores determine those religious actions and thoughts which constitute all that irrational and traditional sanction of "proper" religious attitude on obtruding religious questions. The political mores determine the

[1] Sumner, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 77.

political acts and ways of thinking which constitute political orthodoxy, allegiance to party, respect for laws and constitution; they determine political "propriety" in a time and place.

The existence of "classes" in society is an important factor in changing the mores. "Leisure" classes, differentiated by one standard or another, at one time or another, have controlled the policy of generations. "Classes" have their own mores, but they have selected purposes and they have invented ways of fulfilling them.[1] Their ways however are nearly always imitated by the "masses." "Classes" set up models of luxury, frivolity, and vice, also of refinement, culture, and art. They more freely regulate their lives by choice than the "masses" can, and so they can introduce variations in living. Tarde has said: "Given the opportunity, a nobility will always and everywhere imitate its leaders, its kings or suzerains, and the people, likewise, given the opportunity, its nobility."[2]

The "masses" are not merely "classes" at the base of a social pyramid; they are the core of society. They accept life as they find it and live by tradition and habit. They are conservative, but their conservatism is not the politic conservation of controlling "classes." It is rather a conservatism existing in spite of interests, a conservatism of mere inertia.[3]

The mores of the masses admit of no sudden change or massive modification. New models of imitation are assimilated slowly and are attended at every stage by modifying influences. What the controlling classes adopt, whether it be good or ill, may be found pervading the mass of later

[1] Sumner, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

[2] Tarde, *Laws of Imitation*, p. 217.

[3] Sumner, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

generations, "but it will appear as a resultant of all the vicissitudes of the folkways in the interval." [1]

Custom however is subject to revision even though change be gradual and the revision slight. Professor Giddings says: "Traditional belief is ever being modified by new thought; there is an integration of tradition with current opinion. The results are variously known as standards, codes, policies, ideals, tastes, faiths, creeds and 'isms'." [2]

Of models of imitation and their great significance, Bagehot has said:

> . . . this unconscious imitation and encouragement of appreciated character, and this equally unconscious shrinking from the persecution of disliked character, is the main force which moulds and fashions men in society as we now see it . . . the more acknowledged causes, such as change of climate, alteration of political institutions, progress of science, act primarily through this cause . . . they change the object of imitation and the object of avoidance, and so work their effect.[3]

The appreciated character which becomes the object of imitation must have within it elements of the old as well as a spice of the new. People appreciate when things are so far familiar. Consequently when the new object is a new combination of old materials, the craving for variety is stimulated while confidence is maintained. Tarde recognizes this necessity when he says:

> And yet the traditional and customary element is always, I repeat, preponderant in social life, and this preponderance is forcibly revealed in the way in which the most radical and revolutionary innovations spread abroad; for their supporters can farther them only through oratorical or literary talent,

[1] Sumner, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

[2] Giddings, *The Principles of Sociology*, 3rd. ed., p. 145.

[3] Bagehot, *Physics and Politics*, p. 97.

through superior handling of language, not of scientific, or philosophic, or technical language, all bristling with new terms, but of the old antique language of the people, so well known to Luther and Voltaire and Rousseau. The old ground is always the vantage-point from which to tumble down old edifices and to rear up new ones. The established morality is always the basis for the introduction of new political ideas.[1]

Professor Ross in his chapter on "Custom" interprets Tarde by saying: "For a while the course of imitation is between the past and the present; then the current changes, and the course of imitation lies between contemporaries. To down-transmission or social heredity succeeds cross-imitation or conventionality."[2]

Probably there has never been more cross-imitation in all history than in the past half-century and at the present time. The tremendous development of science, the advantages accruing from mechanical invention, and the firmer economic basis of industry and commerce, have combined to complicate the simple process of down-transmission which was hardly uninterrupted for centuries. All these factors have contributed to man's control of nature and have conspired to bring about his emancipation from environmental constraints. Two results, inextricably related, have followed. On the one hand there has been growing among all classes an increasing confidence in the power of man. On the other hand, there has been a gradual undermining of belief in the infallibility of tradition. Natural barriers between civilized societies, such as oceans, continents, deserts, and mountain ranges, have almost ceased to be barriers. Besides possibilities of travel for masses of people, opportunities for communication are opened to those

[1] Tarde, *op. cit.*, pp. 246-7.

[2] Ross, *Social Control*, p. 186.

who have to remain at home. In the United States alone more than eleven billion telephone messages are annually sent.[1]

Traditions which contain elements of superstition and prejudice, are often protected by the isolation of the group in which they flourish. Prejudice and superstition feed upon the local and familiar things. The belief that one's home town is superoir to the town a hundred miles away is not weakened by staying at home. If tradition teaches that the local and old-fashioned way of life is best, nothing can make a sudden change in that way of life short of actual experience of a better way.

The broader and firmer economic foundation of our civilization is another source of confidence. The growth of commerce and industry to the present enormous dimensions, the resulting tendency towards universalism and disinterestedness in great business and financial enterprises, has contributed to the destruction of much prejudice and superstition. "The ultimate explanation of the rise of humanitarianism is the increased power of man over nature by the acquisition of new land, and by advance in the arts. When men ceased to crowd on each other, they were all willing to adopt ideas and institutions which made the competition of life easy and kindly."[2] Old breeding places of superstition become more circumscribed. The cherished idea of a "fixed" and "absolute" order of things has received rude handling by modern evolutionist science; and the mores of the controlling classes are being permeated by scientific ideas. But the mores of the "masses" are more resistant.

No world philosophy, until the modern scientific world philosophy, and that only within a generation or two, has ever presented itself as perhaps transitory, certainly incomplete,

[1] *The New International Encyclopedia*, vol. xix, p. 106.

[2] Sumner, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

and liable to be set aside to-morrow by more knowledge. No popular world philosophy or life policy ever can present itself in that light. It would cost too great a mental strain. All the groups whose mores we consider far inferior to our own are quite as well satisfied with theirs as we are with ours.[1]

Indeed the implications of the new scientific notions of change are almost inconceivable to the masses. Generations must pass before the real meaning of these ideas can penetrate their mores. What change may come will be exceedingly slow, for "changes which run with the mores are easily brought about, but . . . changes which are opposed to the mores require long and patient effort, if they are possible at all."[2] The universality of the implications of the new ideas make them essentially opposed to mores. They are independent of ritual, and changes which affect ritual modify mores in the shortest time. Therefore the limits within which it is possible to introduce new ideas into the mores by educational means, are narrow.[3] Traditional elements are bound to give way eventually in conflict with new interests arising out of modern science and invention. But change in the mores of the masses can come only through continued substitution of new material bit by bit for the old through generations. Professor Boas says:

There is an undoubted tendency in the advance of civilization to eliminate traditional elements, and to gain a clearer and clearer insight into the hypothetical basis of our reasoning. It is therefore not surprising that, with the advance of civilization, reasoning becomes more and more logical, not because each individual carries out his thought in a more logical manner, but because the traditional material which is handed down to each individual has been thought out and worked out more thoroughly and more carefully.[4]

[1] Sumner, *op. cit.*, p. 79. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 94. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 95.
[4] Boas, "The Mind of Primitive Man," p. 8.

CHAPTER V

Elementary School Curricula and the Mores

"Remembering how vast is the inertia of ignorance, how brief is the time within which we may hope to impress enduring lessons upon the minds of our fellow-men, we cannot afford to misdirect our efforts or to squander any energy that may be available for the discipline and enlightenment of the people." [1]

In view of the fact that over ninety per cent of our school population attends only elementary schools the importance of the elementary school in the educational system is evident. When we ask ourselves whether our elementary school system really functions as we desire that it should in the light of the foregoing quotation, we find that the question can be answered only by considering two other matters. The first is that the power of forming rational opinion by clear thinking can be attained only through knowledge of the real facts of life. The other is the nature of the subject-matter of the elementary school curriculum. If the subjects taught comprise our best knowledge of the facts of life, the elementary school is furnishing its pupils with material of real social value. If, however, the subjects taught comprise only material which is largely of a traditional nature, the elementary school training is but a wider confirmation of ordinary mores. In such a case, as formerly, intellectual education functions as the conserver of tradition.

[1] Giddings, "Popular Instruction in a Democracy," in *Democracy and Empire* (New York, 1901), p. 234.

In a previous chapter we have seen that any explanation which a man gives of his new impressions must be in terms of traditional material, which makes up his mental content. In savagery and in civilization the average man carries his attempt to explain only far enough to amalgamate the new phenomenon with previously held ideas. Thus the result of the process depends upon the character of that traditional material. Therefore the immense importance of folklore in determining a mode of thought, the enormous influence of current philosophic opinion upon the masses, and the influence of the dominant scientific theory upon the character of scientific work.[1]

We can hardly exaggerate therefore the significance of the character of traditional material. If it is full of superstitions and prejudicial beliefs, the interpretation put upon natural phenomena will be correspondingly distorted. More specifically, if present mental content is composed of beliefs that are mutually exclusive, or contradictory, explanations of experience are equally irrational, and conduct is eccentric.

The same stimulus acting on the primitive and the civilized man's mind, sets up different associations because of differences in traditional content of the mind. This results in different explanations of the same phenomena. Thus an explosion may associate itself in the primitive mind with a tale of the miraculous creation of the world and awaken feelings of uncontrollable fear; in the civilized mind, the explosion may raise question of where the dynamite or powder was stored, how much explosive was ignited, how it came to explode, and so on.

Many examples might be given of differences in the thought of civilized men in different social classes. The

[1] Boas, "The Mind of Primitive Man," p. 7.

person in question may have known of a chance case where some member of a dinner party of thirteen happened to die a short time after the occasion. In this case the person dislikes to attend a dinner party of thirteen because the traditional associations brought up tend to cause a fear of mysterious consequences. To mention only one, the survival in many highly intelligent minds of the thirteen superstition, which has wholly disappeared from other minds is certainly attributable to differences in traditional content.

A folk-lore content absorbed in the early days of plasticity and adaptability, usually is but little modified in the years succeeding youth. For one thing the average man has not the time nor the energy for self-improvement beyond what comes in the daily routine of life. The mores of the average home are beyond doubt narrow and provincial. Only one other agency of inculcation touches the average individual in formative years, namely the elementary school.

The subject-matter of the elementary school curriculum therefore largely determines the mental content by which new observations and continuing reflections upon experience will be refracted throughout life. And since our interpretations of experience react on conduct, it is unnecessary to dwell on the enormous importance to the individual and to society of the actual character of the alleged knowledge which the elementary school inculcates. If it is to neutralize the superstitions and the damaging suggestions that pour in upon the young mind from every quarter during formative years it must be true to the facts of life, and universal in quality. A normal mental content consisting of knowledge of the real facts of life viewed in the light of a wide and tolerant interest, is the only guarantee of moral balance and intellectual equilibrium.

We ask then: Does the elementary school of to-day offer such a normal mental content, as a preparation for modern life, or does it only supplement and confirm traditional matter already supplied from elsewhere?

Examining time allotments of various subjects in the curricula of the public elementary schools of America, England, Germany and France, we obtain some notion of the estimated importance of the three R's as compared with the three content studies Geography, Science, and History. From Dr. Payne's tables of the curricula of thirty representative cities, ten American, ten English, ten German, and the curriculum of the whole centralized French system, we obtain the following general conclusions. The average time allotment to the three R's in the elementary school systems of these four nations, is about 56 per cent. Geography receives about 6 per cent, Science, including Nature Study, Elementary Science, Object Lessons, etc., slightly over 4 per cent, and History less than 5 per cent of the entire time of school hours.[1] Individual variations among the systems are somewhat as follows.[2] The time allotments to the three R's, in the American, English, and German cities are all around 60 per cent, whereas the French system stands alone in giving less than 50 per cent time to these subjects. But there is more diversity among the nations in time allotment to the three content

[1] The ten American cities were: New York City, Boston, Chicago, New Orleans, San Francisco, Kansas City, Kan., Jersey City, Columbus, Ga., Louisville, Ky., and Cleveland, O. The ten English cities were: London, Manchester, West Ham, Bolton, Norwich, Carlisle, West Hartlepool, New Castle, Wellingborough, and Castleford. The ten German cities were: Berlin, Königsburg, Göttingen, Wiesbaden, Dresden, München, Würzburg, Stuttgart, Karlesruhe, and Hamburg. For statistics and tables see B. R. Payne, *Public Elementary School Curricula* (New York, 1905), p. 195, table lxi.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 39, 96, 137, 164, tables xiii, xxxvii, lvi, and lix.

studies. France is well ahead in a time allotment to Geography and History of about 16 per cent, America stands next with about 12 per cent, and England and Germany stand last with from 8 to 10 per cent. In Science, France is again ahead with about 6 per cent, the other countries average about 4 per cent each.

When we examine these thirty representative cities of America, England, and Germany, with reference to the variations among cities in respective time allotments to these subjects, we obtain interesting results. There is a greater range of variation in time allotment devoted to the three R's among the ten American cities, than among the ten English cities or among the ten German cities. But there is a smaller range of variation in the time allotments devoted to Geography, Science, and History, among American cities, than is found among the cities of either of the other groups. The fact that the American systems vary less than the foreign systems do, in time devoted to the three content studies perhaps points to the conclusion that in America these subjects have received more permanent recognition than in the foreign countries. That is, Geography, Science, and History, have come to stay in the American system, whereas in England and Germany there must still be some difference of opinion respecting their place in the public elementary school curriculum. This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that in America there is now a difference of opinion about the apportionment of time to the three R's, while in foreign systems the variation at this point is slight. Moreover, since there is no central authority in the American system, as there is in all of the foreign systems, requiring a minimum of prescribed studies, the curricula of the American systems may perhaps be regarded as the more natural and genuine reflection of national mores. This conclusion is supported

by a remarkable uniformity of time allotments to content studies by city systems in widely separated parts of our country.

Our city school systems are on the whole more progressive than rural systems in their adjustment to social needs. We will therefore examine the curricula of the elementary and grammar schools in some of our most representative and progressive city school systems.[1] In this way organized education as it reaches the masses, may be given the benefit of the doubt.

The intellectual part of the school curriculum, the part that here concerns us, consists of a study of the three R's, geography, science, and history. The three content studies represent distinctly modern introductions.[2] The three R's, reading, writing, and arithmetic, are given over 40 per cent of the entire time, and if we include with the three R's, spelling, language, and literature, these traditional subjects have over 62 per cent of the time.[3] Thus the content studies which we have mentioned, are actually given much less than 30 per cent of the entire time because such additional subjects as music, manual training, drawing, gymnastics, etc., are also provided for. Historically

[1] From the syllabi of courses in Geography, Science, and History, of New York City, Boston, Chicago, Columbus, Ga.; St. Louis, Mo.; Buffalo, N. Y.; Cleveland, O., and Columbus, O., and from Dr. Payne's tables as mentioned above.

[2] Payne, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-62.

[3] The figures that Dr. Payne gives on p. 39, table xiii, for the period 1900 to 1904 have not been essentially modified since, *i. e.*, a table like Payne's table xiii, based on the average time given in the year 1909-1910 to each study in each grade of the schools of Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Rochester, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Chicago, Milwaukee and San Francisco, shows results which agree with Payne's table.

since 1868, the three R's have lost time and geography, science, and history, have gained time.[1]

Let us note next at what grades the three content studies, geography, science, and history, are most stressed.[2]

The largest time allotment is given to geography in grades iv, v and vi. In grade iv geography receives more attention than in grades v and vi, although the subject is spread over the whole course of eight grades. When we examine the precise topical subject-matter taught, we find that besides political geography some elementary notions of physical geography, mineralogy, meteorology, astronomy, and even economics and sociology, run through the courses as given in some of our most progressive city school systems.[3] We find, however, that notions of general human interest and genuine social value have not penetrated below the fourth grade but are usually confined to the later grades. The reason for this is in part the extreme youth of the pupils at grades iv and below, and in part another circumstance which we shall consider later. The topics in geography introduced in the primary grades are naturally the most elementary notions. The subject is usually confined for the first five grades to local and state geography. It is common to find the broader economic, social, and scientific aspects of the subject treated in the higher grades. Besides these subjects of universal interest, world geography with a more or less intensive study of European

[1] Payne, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-62.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 49, *et seq.*

[3] Notably those of Boston, Buffalo, Chicago, and New York. For example, in the syllabus of topics taught under Geography in Boston, we find such subjects as Routes of Travel, Study of People Industries, World Relations, Commerce, Climatic Features, Great Features of Relief, the Making of Soils, Drainage, etc., etc., and similarly for the other cities mentioned.

and Oriental countries receives attention in the last four grades. Political geography is stressed throughout.

Science in the elementary schools, taught as nature study or better still as a part of geography, runs through all grades but is disorganized.[1] There seems to be little agreement among cities as to the grouping of the diverse topics treated and less regarding the grade in which a topic should receive most emphasis. Generally speaking, however, descriptive botanical (flowers, trees, grains, mosses, etc.) and descriptive zoological (animals, birds, fishes, their habits, etc.) subjects receive most attention in the first six grades. This arrangement is of course, largely determined by the nature of the subjects concerned, and the capacity of the child mind. Geological and mineralogical subjects receive greatest stress in grades iv, v and vi. This is natural because these subjects are most conveniently connected with the study of geography as emphasized in the same grades. Elementary meteorological topics, dealing with the weather, winds, climatic changes, etc., are touched upon in all grades. Physics, as perhaps the most difficult and abstract subject under science is almost entirely confined to grades vii and viii. Generally speaking, the tendency seems to be for science to find its place in the elementary school curriculum as an enrichment of the study of geography.

History, in some respects the most important of the three content studies, is distributed unequally over the grades. It is emphasized most in the last three grades. Before grade six, it consists almost wholly of mythological tales and historical or biographical narrative. American History is the beginning point in all the systems. Topics dealing with explorations, settlements, and inventions sel-

[1] Payne, *op. cit.*, p. 51, table xviii.

dom appear before grade iii. At least seven wars receive most attention in grades vi, vii and viii, to the probable exclusion of much valuable matter of a sociological or economic nature. Topics dealing with movements of population and general economic subjects, receive almost no attention before grade vi. Political history is predominant and is confined largely to the grades above the sixth. The social sciences tend to find a place in the elementary school curriculum as an enrichment of the study of history.

Throughout the teaching of these content-subjects it is easy to discern the element of tradition running. For example, everywhere political geography is emphasized at the expense of science and wider interests. For political reasons it is perhaps desirable that this should be so, but it is doubtful whether the rational sanction behind this procedure is as strong as the traditional sanction. Admirable as it is to develop a spirit of national patriotism it is also desirable to cultivate a spirit of world citizenship. The large foreign populations of our great cities make it necessary to inculcate the national traditions, but this is not a reason for neglecting the wider aspects of human interests. In the history courses myths, legends, heroic tales and stories of historical characters, valuable when properly taught, are emphasized at the expense of topics of wider social and economic interest. Political history and wars take up time in the later grades to the exclusion of the study of movements of population, inventions, and scientific discoveries. In short, the curriculum is adapted to the mores of our country. It conserves them, and perpetuates those elements of patriotism which have a traditional and sentimental sanction instead of a rational justification. The idea of a "chosen people," a probable survival of the grim necessity of early group patriotism, is

still dominant. It pervades the school histories. If the writers of text-books on history got outside the mores of their own country, however great the scientific value or the universal human interest of their work their books would not be used. The elementary school conserves the mores of the "masses." "Scientific" history expresses the mores of a class. A strictly non-partisan text-book of history, then, could not be used in the elementary school. Yet it is most desirable that school histories should tend in the non-partisan direction. The citizenship of nations is becoming a citizenship of the world.

The elementary school systems of our largest and most progressive cities offer the children a curriculum of increasing richness in the higher grades. If all the children who entered the first grade remained eight years to complete the grammar school course, they would get at least a smattering of facts of broad human and scientific interest. It is not, however, always possible to obtain teachers whose training has qualified them to give pupils the full benefit of the suggestions in some of these syllabi. Moreover, there is another factor of grave importance and considerable dimensions which more than halves the good these broad courses might otherwise do, namely retardation and elimination of pupils.

Examining the grade distribution of pupils in the elementary school systems of 1,024 American cities of 4,000 inhabitants and over, we find that the figures show a startling diminution from the first grade to the eighth.[1] The figures for the eight grades in the order i to viii, are: 755,388; 591,345; 573,724; 538,451; 481,961; 409,817; 332,987; and 247,230. That the number in the seventh grade is less than one half of the first, and the number in the

[1] *Report of the United States Commissioner of Education*, for 1909, vol. ii, p. 629.

eighth grade, less than one third of the first, is startling. Population factors of births and deaths are wholly inadequate to explain these phenomena.[1] The discrepancy between the numbers in the first and last grades must be explained on other grounds. Retardation and elimination of pupils is the phenomenon which, when correlated with population factors, explains this condition of affairs.[2]

Retardation is a widespread evil. Professor G. D. Strayer shows how extensive it is in his study of 319 American cities.[3] He finds that the percentage of retarded pupils to the whole number in school for any particular city school system, ranges from 8 per cent in some cities to 74 per cent in others. A range of retardation of from 30 to 40 per cent is common. The median is at about 38 per cent. For retardations of 1 and 2 years the median percents are about 20 and 10.

Professor E. L. Thorndike reached the following conclusions from his study of elimination in 1907.[4]

At least 25 out of 100 children of white population of our country who enter school stay only long enough to learn to read simple English, write such words as they commonly use and perform the four operations for integers without serious

[1] L. P. Ayres, "Factors Affecting Grade Distribution," *Psychological Clinic* (1908), vol. ii, p. 131.

[2] Retardation means the retention of a pupil in a grade when his age is such that if he had progressed normally he should be in a higher grade. For example, if a pupil of 14 years of age is found in grade vi, it is said that he is retarded. Since the normal age for grade vi is from 11 to 13 years, the pupil should have advanced to grade viii, where the normal age is from 13 to 15 years. Normal age for any particular grade is the two-year-range-period which occurs most frequently. It is the modal two-year-age-range.

[3] *Report of the United States Commissioners of Education,* 1910, vol. ii, ch. xix.

[4] E. L. Thorndike, "The Elimination of Pupils from School," pp. 9-10, *Bulletin of the Bureau of Education* (1907), no. 4.

errors. A fifth of the children (white) entering the city schools stay only to the fifth grade.

Only about a third graduate from an elementary school of seven grades or more.

Only about half have any teaching of consequence concerning the history of their own country or any other, or concerning the world's literature, science, or art.

One main cause of elimination is incapacity for and the lack of interest in the sort of intellectual work demanded by present courses of study.

More specifically the figures upon which these conclusions were based are as follows: the general tendency of American cities of 25,000 and over, was, about 1900, to keep in school out of 100 entering pupils, 90 till grade iv, 81 till grade v, 68 till grade vi, 54 till grade vii, 40 till the last grammar grade, and 27 till the first year of High School.[1] In other words, 10 per cent of the entering pupils leave before grade iv, 19 per cent leave before grade v, 32 per cent leave before grade vi, 46 per cent leave before grade vii, 60 per cent leave before grade viii, and 73 per cent leave before graduation.[2]

So much for elimination by grades. Elimination by age was found to be as follows.[3] Based on the percentage of

[1] Thorndike, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

[2] Subsequent work on retardation as appearing in various articles in the *Psychological Clinic* and the *Educational Review*, has been in general agreement with the results of Professor Thorndike's study. The school authorities, however, have taken the matter of retardation in hand. The older pupils instead of being held back with the younger ones are now promoted or else sent to a school for backward children. In this way some of the statistical statements of retardation have shown apparent modification. It is quite possible, however, that the apparent modification is the masking of real conditions for administrative purposes rather than any genuine improvement.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

8-year-olds retained the figures showed: 10 years old 100 per cent, 11 years old 98 per cent, 12 years old 97 per cent, 13 years old 88 per cent, 14 years old 70 per cent, 15 years old 47 per cent, 16 years old 30 per cent, 17 years old 16.5 per cent, and 18 years old 8.6 per cent. It will be noticed that the dropping-off becomes considerable among the 13-year-olds where the retention is but 88 as compared with a retention for 12-year-lods of 97. From the 13 group up the retention decreases rapidly.

This second series of results is enlightening when compared with the first. For instance, there is a relation between the fact that so many remained in school till the ages 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14, and so few till grades v, vi, vii, and viii. There is a relation also between the fact that 97 per cent of the 8-years-olds remained till 12, while only 68 per cent of those in the second grade remained till the sixth grade. This relation means something when we learn two other facts: one is, that the normal age for grade iv is 9 to 11 years; for grade v, 10 to 12 years; for grade vi, 11 to 13 years; and for grade vii, 12 to 14 years: the second fact is, that there are large numbers of 13-year-olds in grades v and vi. It means that many of these older children are retarded.

The fact that large numbers (97 per cent) of the pupils remained till the age of 12 (at which age they should normally be in grade vi) coupled with the fact that only 68 per cent of those entering remained to the beginning of grade vi, points to the conclusion that many of these children must have been retarded at least one year. Since the elimination of pupils in any grade, especially in the lower grades is largely of older pupils, it must be precisely these retarded pupils who drop out. The retarded pupils are usually dull, uninterested, or unfortunate children who are old enough to work but have no prospect of graduating.

The interesting fact then is that the retarded pupils who are old enough to work but have no incentive to remain in school are the ones who do drop out and go to work. Whereas the children who are old enough to work and are not retarded, usually remain in school and complete the course. This tendency is true of each grade as we go up. The permissible inference to draw is therefore, that a considerable proportion of pupils retarded from one to two years, drop out from mere lack of interest.[1] If they were not retarded they would in all probability continue with the others who are old enough to work but nevertheless remain. The incentive of economic gain as represented by work age has been balanced against interest in the studies. In the retardation case the older child goes over a dreary routine of childish studies. His interests are not there. The most natural thing to do is to obey the incentive to work and drop out. And these pupils who are older than the normal age for the grade in which they are found, represent large waste.

With these figures in mind let us discuss their significance in the light of our previous study of the elementary school curriculum. Having correlated grade elimination with age elimination, and both with retardation, let us correlate them all with the topical distribution of subjects in the curriculum.

The 10 per cent who left before the fourth grade, received, besides a training in the three R's, almost no geography, because as we have seen that subject is stressed after grade iii; even less material of any historical value, for history is confined practically to grades after the fifth; and only so much elementary descriptive science as could be given in beginning geography. In short, this ten per

[1] As physical and mental defects are often found among retarded children, lack of interest in studies may be due quite as much to this fact as to faults of instruction.

cent group received almost no part of the very limited liberal training of the elementary school. The 20 per cent who dropped out before grade v, fared little better than the group just named. The only difference was that they got more geography. Twenty per cent of those who entered, therefore, received only a training of the most narrow school mores.

The 32 per cent who left before the sixth grade, had studied more geography than the previous groups, but had not reached the point in the grades where geography is taught in its broadest aspects. They had a little training in elementary science as that was related with geography. As for history, which is emphasized chiefly with all its richness in grades vi and following, they had none of it. The training of this group was a little wider than that of either of the previous groups. The mores inculcated were slightly leavened with wider interests.

The 46 per cent who left before the seventh grade had all the training of the last group and had the beginnings of the instruction in history which form the ground-work for valuable studies of the next two grades.

But at this point in the grades, as the figures of retardation and elimination show, large numbers had begun to drop out and that the ones who did drop out were the over age pupils for grades iv, v and vi. In other words, grades iv, v and vi were glutted with over age pupils, pupils 12, 13, and 14 years old who should normally have been in the three higher grades because retardation reaches its height at grades iv, v, and vi. Of these over-age pupils, some had gone far enough to receive a training in the fundamentals. Others had just reached the point where the elements of social science begin to be taught in the courses in geography and history. They had reached the age at which unretarded pupils go into higher grades and study

the more valuable and interesting topics in the content studies. Because they had no prospect of getting ahead and had to mark time in the study of the three R's or else in the most elementary notions of geography, science, and history, they lost interest and dropped out. They had barely reached the point where the content studies begin to take on an aspect of universal human interest, when they were eliminated.

We saw that history received most attention in grades vi, vii and viii. When we remember that the tendency is for only 40 out of every one hundred entering pupils to complete even grade vii and that only one third complete grade viii, we see how small a proportion of children really get the benefit of history as it is taught in the later grades. But this is assuming an efficient teaching force and a system tuned up to the standard of progressive cities and we must remember that it is rarely possible to obtain as much competency in the teaching force as the best interpretation of the syllabus of the most progressive system demands. As a matter of fact, a careful study of the teaching population, has shown that it is drawn from classes hardly capable of grasping the responsibility of their positions.[1] Moreover, it should be remembered that these conclusions are drawn from an examination of courses given in some of our most progressive city school systems, and are representative of the best rather than of the worst conditions. When these considerations are taken into account in connection with retardation, we must conclude that the elementary school does not impart as much knowledge of wide interests as the syllabi of its more progressive exponents would seem to show.[2]

[1] L. D. Coffman, *The Composition of the Teaching Population* (New York, 1911).

[2] The foregoing comparisons between grade retardation, elimination, and grade emphasis on content studies, are based on the figures for

In a previous chapter we saw how education conserves the mores of the "masses" and the mores of the "classes." We here observe the case in which education conserves certain mores of the "masses" in the curriculum of the elementary school. As soon as education becomes public and is conducted on the large scale so that it reaches the masses it gets into their mores and becomes an instrument to preserve them. Suetonius tells us of the schools of the Latin Rhetoricians; how at first they were opposed because their methods of teaching and the things they taught seemed fundamentally different from what "our ancestors have ordained," and how by degrees, when the mores had time to change and absorb new notions, they became popular and "rhetoric manifested itself to be a useful and honorable study." In America time was when "education was insisted on chiefly for religious reasons." [1] The secondary schools of our early national history had a decided religious bias.[2] At the present time religious instruction has disappeared from the curricula of our elementary schools.[3] Traditions have changed in the increasing heterogeneity of

elimination in Professor Thorndike's study of conditions in 1900. Since that date there has been apparent progress in the correction of retardation. The result has been that to make Thorndike's figures true to conditions of 1910-1911 they must be somewhat modified. They would be approximately true of later conditions if we conceived of them as shoved up a grade, or of the figures considerably reduced in their original positions. Such a change in the emphasis of elimination connected with the more improved courses of instruction since 1900 might mean a better functioning of the elementary school system were there no reason for doubting that these figures were truly representative. The figures of Strayer on retardation, and the work of Coffman on the teaching force, present reasons for doubting any real increased efficiency of the schools since 1900.

[1] E. P. Cubberley, *Changing Conceptions of Education*, p. 25.

[2] N. M. Butler, *Education in America*, Monograph on "Secondary Education," by Commissioner E. E. Brown, pp. 143-205.

[3] Monroe, *History of Education*, p. 750.

our population brought about by the immigration of foreign peoples with different mores and different standards. Orthodox religion in its narrow sense is no more the autocrat of the mores of the masses. Moreover the great increase in the amount of our knowledge makes necessary a greater complexity of preparation for life. Ability to read, write, and cipher is no longer the distinguishing mark of an educated man.[1]

Any way of acting, any way of thinking which is habitual, all the vast systems of usages which cover the whole of life, serve all its interests, and contain within themselves their own justification by tradition and use and wont—are mores. It is "the proper thing" to teach reading, writing and arithmetic in the elementary schools, because, in the memory of men now living, the schools have always taught them. These subjects are in the school mores. When the newer content studies were introduced they were regarded as "fads and frills". The most worthy ones among them now have a sure foothold and have come to stay.

Much aversion to "fads and frills" is not only direct hostility to anything new in the curriculum, but is also dissatisfaction with the results of an expanding policy. It is said that the curriculum is overcrowded. The overcrowding of curricula is probably caused in the main by the two following tendencies: First, an accumulation of material consisting of a mass of scientific facts which present the appearance of little coördination and much isolation: second, the accumulation of obsolete traditional material which becomes continually more worthless because as time goes on it gets farther and farther away from the traditions and precedents which originally put it in the curriculum. Conditions change but the subjects in the curriculum are not easily dislodged.

[1] Cubberley, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19.

An examination of the first of the hypothetical causes explains in part the conditions. The new scientific ideas and the ideas of evolution, have a diffusion with a rather limited intellectual class. Practical ideas, entering the folkways and condensed and selected in the mores represent a wider diffusion. Imitation proceeds most readily from above downward. New scientific ideas in the process of filtration down through the mores of the masses have been rubbed down and smoothed off like old coins, until only summary and glib propositions get currency.[1] Scientific theories have been broken up into unrelated facts and isolated instances for the reason that as ideas they were essentially hostile and disturbing to folk-beliefs. The result is a compromise. Dangerous implications of general scientific theory have been avoided by reducing the study of science in the schools to a study of its most commonplace results. Therefore, although new scientific ideas are pretty well unified in the upper fields of education, by the time they have penetrated to the grades of the elementary school they have been reduced by impact with counter notions in the mores (for example, the traditional idea of creation) to a harmless study of isolated and out-of-date facts.

The recognition of this state of affairs has led to queries by many writers. Fouillée wondered whether loading the memory of our youth with the results of modern science, "the brutal scientific fact," was the best way to develop their intelligence.[2] Professor Dewey complains that in the present teaching of science the material is presented in purely objective form, or "is treated as a new peculiar kind of experience which the child can add to that which he has

[1] Sumner, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

[2] Fouillée, *Education from the National Standpoint* (New York, 1892), Greenstreet translation, p. 38.

already had." [1] As a matter of fact science attains its real value when it gives ability to interpret and control the experience already had. But the control that science gives is a control that seems essentially hostile to mores control. Science-control is by scepticism, criticism and balanced judgment; mores-control is by unquestioning allegiance to custom and tradition. The two are incompatible. Life outside the school is by mores. Inside the school the attempt has been to cultivate an acquaintance with facts which often seem unrelated to mores. Hence the unsocial school as Professor Dewey calls it.[2] The "tragic weakness" of the school is therefore that it endeavors to prepare a future member of the social order in a medium in which the conditions of the social spirit are eminently lacking.[3]

Professor Albion W. Small reminds us that some students do not see till years after graduation from college that the different subjects which they studied were aspects of one reality, a thought which pedagogy had concealed in making the fragments prominent. Professor Small goes still deeper when he says that the most serious fact in this pedagogical perversion is not that it limits knowledge but that it distorts the whole attitude of men towards the world. Instead of introducing them to reality it tricks them into the belief that an unorganized procession of pedantic abstractions is reality.[4] Professor Dewey says, further: "There is much of utter triviality of subject-matter in elementary and secondary education. When we investigate it, we find that it is full of facts taught that

[1] Dewey, *My Pedagogic Creed*, p. 12.

[2] Dewey, *The School and Society* (Chicago, 1899), p. 85, *et seq.*

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] A. W. Small. *Demands of Sociology on Pedagogy*, p. 20.

are not facts, which have to be unlearned later on." [1] He believes that this is because the lower parts of our system are not in vital touch with the higher.

The second reason for the overcrowding of the curriculum is that the mores which the elementary school conserves are actually behind the mores of the time and place. Mores never contain provision for their own amendment. They do not stimulate thought, but the contrary, for the thinking is already done and is embodied within them.[2] Mores are not questions, they are answers to the problems of life. As such, they present themselves as final and unchangeable and give answers that are offered as "the truth". Therefore their adjustment to the changing conditions is slow of necessity and is made slower by the conditions of the school. These are such that whatever gets into school mores is pretty certain to stay. The school is an institution, a social "concretion" of the most permanent elements in the mores. The mores which the school conserves are bolstered up by the "systematized sanction" of institutional tradition. School mores are always determined by the older members of the community and therefore tend to be conservative. The mores determined by the older generation tend to persist in the school curriculum after that generation has gone, and been replaced by a new one. The second elderly generation also tends to be conservative, and usually puts more confidence in precedent than in initiative. Consequently the oldest mores are likely to persist in the school curriculum long after the mores of the outer world have changed to meet new conditions.

A very unfortunate result of standardization on the basis of lagging school mores is seen in the tendency to produce

[1] Dewey, *The School and Society*, pp. 88-89.

[2] Sumner, *Folkways*, p. 79.

boys and girls who are all of one pattern as if turned on a lathe. In the public school system there is a tendency to get large quantitative results on a pattern. An orthodoxy in regard to the great doctrines of life is created.[1] And later there develops a cock-sure philosophy of commonplaces and glib generalizations. Superficial knowledge is paraded as "the latest" information in history, geography, and science. Some of it is at least fifty years old.[2] Its "facts" have been long since discarded in the highest parts of the educational system and replaced by better observations and a clearer understanding of conditions. In short, the lagging mores which education preserves confirm the philistinism which in first instance comes out of widespread commercialism, materialism, and the general superficiality of the times. Education which should correct the damaging suggestions of philistinism in fact often gives them the stamp of approval. These results are incident to the progress of a great democratic experiment and we should try to lessen them.

If indeed our elementary school is the agent for shaping the mores of the "masses" it deserves much more attention than it has received. The conservation of the mores of selected "classes" has been the chief function of education hitherto. We have our universities, professional schools, colleges, and secondary schools, concerned with the preservation of certain mores of the more or less highly selected classes. In these institutions there is a tendency to replace the traditional by the rational. Can we say the same of the elementary school? The specialized parts of our educational system rarely reach the 95 per cent of our school population which attends only the elementary school.

[1] Sumner, *op. cit.*, p. 631.

[2] This is emphasized by Dewey, Sumner and Cubberley.

In the elementary school lies the only opportunity to give to the people verified facts of broad human interest which should increasingly modify blind allegiance to tradition and afford a basis for rational opinion.

The mores are of wider distribution than scientific ideas. In education, practical ideas combined with folk beliefs and folkways selected and condensed in mores, are bottom layers of a pyramid. At the top of the pyramid are scientific ideas. But the elimination of pupils from school occurs before the top layers are reached. So the majority of those who are supposed to enjoy the "advantages" of our educational system never get to that point in the system where notions and facts of genuine scientific value and real human interest come in. Education remains, as formerly, the conserver of tradition.

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